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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLES OF LITERACY TUTORS

BY

SUSAN DEVINS

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

IN

ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1991

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Perceptions of the Roles of Literacy Tutors submitted by Susan Ruth Devins in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Adult and Higher Education in the Department of Adult, Career and Technology Education.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the perceptions of volunteer literacy tutors' roles as viewed by tutors and adult learners working one-on-one. The topics considered in the literature review for this study included contexts and benefits of literacy, roles of tutors and the nature of adult learning. A major component of the study involved the construction of a structured questionnaire which also included open-ended items.

The questionnaire was administered to 32 tutor-learner pairs within organizations based in a large urban centre. Piloting the questionnaire took place in stages and revisions were incorporated as appropriate. Identical questionnaires were administered to participants concurrently, where tutors were allowed to fill out the questionnaire independently while learners were guided through the instrument by the researcher. The structured items were analyzed using descriptive statistics based on the SPSSx package. Open-ended items were analyzed according to common themes.

The content of the questionnaire was organized into the following five sections: demographic characteristics of respondents, why tutors and learners felt it was important to learn to read and write, views of the tutor's roles, responsibilities of tutors and learners, and tutor's personal characteristics. The following demographic profile was found for the typical tutor: female, married, 35 to 44 years of age, urban birthplace, native English speaker, and employed in clerical and administrative occupations. The typical profile for learners was as follows: more balanced gender mix, married, 25 to 34 years of age, urban birthplace, native English speaker, and employed in service and trades occupations. The findings from the structured questionnaire showed that tutors and learners felt the most important reason for learning to read and write was

for one's own purpose. The major findings indicated a discrepancy in that learners viewed tutors as teachers but tutors viewed themselves as guides or friends. Findings also suggested that expectations and roles of tutors were seen as professional as opposed to personal. Tutors most frequently referred to the most important personal characteristics as expressing themselves clearly and being patient. Learners also felt the most important characteristic for tutors was to express themselves clearly. Other important tutor characteristics included having self-confidence, being flexible, and being understanding.

Based on these findings, curricula within adult literacy programs should reflect the important areas which learners have identified. The distribution of responsibility holds important implications for evaluation. The lack of learner involvement may imply that tutoring sessions should be more learner-centered where learners are more a part of goal setting, decision making, and evaluation. Research in the areas of literacy learner roles and responsibilities, as well as volunteer versus paid tutors may be valuable contributions to the field in general.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
	Introduction	1
	Statement of the Problem	1
	Significance of the Study	2
	Assumptions	2
	Limitations and Delimitations	3
	Definition of Terms	4
	Organization of the Thesis	4
2	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
	Nature of Literacy	6
	Definitions of Literacy	6
	Contexts and Benefits of Literacy	8
	Roles of the Tutor and Learner	9
	Role Theory	9
	Interview Studies of Tutor Roles	10
	Other Literature on Tutor Roles	13
	Personal and Professional Characteristics of Tutors	17
	Roles of the Learner	19
	Nature of Adult Learning	19
	Summary and Implications for the Study	22
3	DESIGN OF THE STUDY	24
	The Survey Instrument	24
	Construction of the Questionnaire	24
	Sources	24

Chapter		Page
3	Construction of the Items	25
	Pilot Study	30
	Revisions of the Questionnaire	30
	Major Changes	30
	Minor Changes	32
	Validation of Instrument	33
	Selection of the Sample	33
	Collection and Analysis of Data	34
	Collection of the Data	34
	Analysis of Data	36
4	FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	38
	Demographic Characteristics of Tutors and Learners	38
	Education of Respondent's Parents and Spouse	40
	Employment	42
	Prior Involvement in a Literacy Program	42
	Tutor Training	45
	Time Tutors Spent in Preparation	46
	Reasons for Being Involved in Tutoring	46
	Reasons for Learning to Read and Write	47
	Results on Open-ended Question	47
	Results on Likert Scale	50
	Results on Ranking Task	53
	Comparison of Reasons on Open-ended, Likert, and Ranking Tasks	55
	How Participants View Tutors	55
	Tutor Responsibilities	57

Chapter		Page
4	Division of Tutor-Learner Responsibilities	62
	Personal Characteristics of Tutors	67
	Summary	70
5	SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, & IMPLICATIONS	72
	Summary	72
	Discussion	73
	Discussion of Major Findings	73
	Importance of Learning to Read & Write	73
	Tutor as Teacher, Learner with Little Responsibility	76
	Expectations and Roles of Tutor as Professional	77
	Important Characteristics of Tutors	79
	Conclusions	80
	Discussion of Findings in Relation to Other Research	81
	Implications	85
	Implications for Theory and Practice	85
	Implications for Further Research	87
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	90
	APPENDIX	99
	Instrument	100

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Description	Page
4.1	Demographic Characteristics of Tutors and Learners	39
4.2	Education of Respondent's Parents and Spouse	41
4.3	Employment Status of Tutors and Learners	43
4.4	Occupations of Tutors and Learners	44
4.5	Duration of Learners' Previous Tutoring Experience	45
4.6	Hours Tutors Spent Preparing for Sessions and in Contact with Learners	46
4.7	Occurrences for Learning to Read and Write Categories	49
4.8	Reasons for Learning to Read and Write	51
4.9	Three Most Important Reasons for Learning to Read and Write	54
4.10	How Participants View Tutors	56
4.11	Tutor Responsibilities	58
4.12	Other Activities as Part of Tutors' Roles	61
4.13	Tutor-Learner Responsibilities	63
4.14	Other Activities as Part of Learners' Roles	65
4.15	Personal Characteristics of Tutors	68
4.16	Three Most Important Characteristics of Tutors	69

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Background to the Study

Introduction

Issues relating to adult literacy have become increasingly important, particularly with 1990 being the International Literacy Year. The federal and provincial governments have emerged to take an active role in developing policies and projects aimed at promoting literacy. Within Alberta, the early 80s witnessed the conception of Further Education Councils which represented a coalition of provincial and municipal governments, educational institutions, and inter-agencies in cooperation and liaison over a broad range of programs, including literacy. Community outreach programs have arisen within vocational centres, technical institutes, community colleges, and a variety of non-profit organizations with the common goal of promoting adult literacy. Many of these efforts have drawn upon resources and organizations largely headed up by volunteers. Moreover, the realizations of policies and the facilitation of projects rely heavily on the use of volunteers. It is for these reasons that I decided to focus this study on the role of volunteer tutors within the context of literacy.

Statement of the Problem

The major purpose investigated in this study was to identify and analyze the desired literacy tutor's roles as viewed by adult learners and volunteer literacy tutors.

Two sub problems were identified which helped to clarify the problem statement. These were:

1. How are desired literacy tutors' roles perceived by the volunteer literacy tutors and the adult learners?

2. What similarities and differences are there in desired literacy tutor roles as indicated by volunteer literacy tutors and adult learners?

Significance of the Study

Information regarding the differences in desired volunteer literacy tutors' roles from the viewpoint of the tutor and the learner will be useful first for improving the teaching-learning context for those involved in literacy tutoring and secondly, for improving human resource management. The data generated from this study may also be useful in outlining curriculum materials for literacy programs, and providing feedback for literacy tutors with respect to their teaching styles, skills, and attitudes.

This information can be used as the basis for staff development, in-service training programs for tutors, and evaluation of tutors' work performance. The desired tutors' roles can be included in the curriculum for tutor training. The collection of information from both tutors and learners ensured representation and input from the key parties involved in adult literacy programs.

Assumptions

It was assumed:

1. that the information collected from the volunteer literacy tutors and adult learners would be truthful; and

2. that the research participants would be able to describe the desired roles of literacy tutors in qualitative and quantitative terms.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

1. The information gathered from the student learners might have been limited by their ability to express their ideas and feelings due to their command of the English language or their lack of experience with this type of task.

Delimitations

1. Participants involved in this study were limited to include people in one large urban centre and the immediate surrounding area. This sample of individuals may not be representative of volunteer literacy tutors and adult learners throughout Alberta.

2. This study was concerned with the desired roles of volunteer literacy tutors, and not with evaluating literacy programs or materials.

3. The tutors and learners participating in the study must have been involved in one-on-one literacy tutorial sessions for a minimum of two months.

4. Those literacy tutors who are paid for their work were not included in this study, as there is believed to exist a different set of philosophies, expectations, and roles between volunteer and paid literacy tutors.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were employed:

Adult literacy learner- Any person over the age of 18, engaged in formal or informal learning in a private or group setting, with the intention of acquiring literacy skills (specifically reading and writing skills).

Literacy program- Any organization in which the sole purpose is to facilitate one-on-one tutoring and provide feedback to both partnerships.

Literacy tutors- Any person involved in teaching, guiding, coaching, or instructing literacy to adults through an established agency or institution in a large urban center.

Roles- The functions performed by an individual in a particular situation, process, or operation. Also, roles may be seen as the patterns of behavior which flow from one's status, occupation, or character.

Volunteer coordinator- Any person involved in bringing together adult learners and volunteer tutors for literacy programming. Additional roles of the coordinator may be to over-see the operation of programs, facilities, staffing, and administration.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature which is relevant to the background of this study. It provides a description of the roles of literacy tutors as well as a broader orientation to the nature of literacy and adult learning. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the design and administration of

the survey instrument. In addition, the methodology used to analyze the data is discussed. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study and provides the analysis in text and table format. And finally, Chapter 5 presents a summary and discussion of the findings identified in Chapter 4 and in relation to other research. Chapter 5 also includes conclusions and implications arising from the study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

The year 1990 was declared International Literacy Year. With this declaration emerged a myriad of projects, organizations, educational endeavors, and commitments concerned with literacy issues. This study focuses on the roles of volunteer literacy tutors working one-on-one with adult literacy learners.

In this chapter, an overview of existing literature related to the study is presented. More specifically, the literature review is organized into the following three areas: the nature of literacy, roles of volunteer literacy tutors and learners, and the nature of adult learning. The chapter concludes with a summary of the literature and implications for the study.

Nature of Literacy

Definitions of Literacy

There exist many different definitions and ways of interpreting literacy. The notion of functional literacy permeates North American literature on adult literacy. An example is the definition from the Southam Literacy Study which states "functional literacy is the ability to use printed and written information to function in society" (Calamai, 1987, p. 7).

Within the broader definition of functional literacy, Thomas (1983) considers literacy as "the ability to utilize effectively the communication systems of a given society at a particular time and to participate fully in the rights, responsibilities and privileges of citizenship" (p. 17).

In a more specific context, McKenzie (1987) provided tutors with a checklist of 20 reasons for developing and/or improving the learner's reading ability. The list of reasons provided is merely an elaboration of many tangible, functional literacy tasks and avoids emotional and personal reasons for learning to read. The following items comprise the checklist: read newspapers, read books, read magazines, vote intelligently, read to children, read one complete book, write letters, fill out an employment application, learn about job interviews, get a better job, pass the driver's test, work toward General Equivalency Diploma (GED) preparation classes, learn to read recipes, read the want ads, read grocery ads, shop wisely, read directions on packages and house hold incidentals, find out about community services, help with school work, and improve spelling skills.

Other definitions of literacy include Freire's (1973) notion of education for liberation and empowerment. With political underpinnings, Freire writes about illiterates being oppressed, becoming critically conscious of this state and subsequently changing their situations.

French (1987) and Scribner (1984) view literacy as involving three overlapping outcomes: adaptation or literacy for survival, empowerment, and literacy as a state of grace or human development. Literacy for survival refers to functional literacy skills, as outlined in the Adult Performance Level manual (Northcutt, 1974). The empowerment function of literacy involves those literacy skills which improve the economic well being and status, and allow for a change in the individual's lifestyle. Literacy as a state of grace is connected to religion, where aesthetic and spiritual mastery arise from the ability to read and write.

Further properties of literacy suggested by Thomas (1983) focus on literacy as: a means and not an end in itself, encompassing many skills (not

only reading and writing), a tool for self-fulfillment, and involving participation of learners and leading to participation in society. These four properties fall outside of any particular definition of literacy and provide a basis for analyzing the tutor-learner dynamics.

Contexts and Benefits of Literacy

There appear to be many opinions regarding why literacy is important in people's lives. The importance of reading in the adult's life can be viewed according to the following five contexts for literacy use identified at a conference at the Open University in 1973: home and family, employment, consumerism, leisure, and community (Kedney, 1975). With a stronger focus on the individual, Jones and Charnley (1978) set forth five dimensions of the importance of literacy as perceived by learners as follows: parenthood, vocation, social opportunity, social interaction, and self image.

Another way of viewing contexts for literacy from the industry's standpoint was included in a manual written for volunteer literacy site managers in Philadelphia. Brandt (1985) delineated the following six main categories with detailed subcategories: government and law, community resources, consumer economics, parenting, occupational knowledge, and health care. This classification differs from those previously mentioned by including the areas of government and health care.

From a more tangible point of view, Chickering (as quoted in Cross, 1981) addressed the issue of why adults pursue further learning and devised an outline of five benefits: for social relationships, to meet expectations of employers, to improve income or lifestyle, to obtain stimulation or relief from other situations, and for intellectual interest.

Harman (1987) discussed functional literacy in the contexts of occupational issues, mobility, personal and social issues, and as something of value to society. Moreover, when discussing why people should be literate, Harman suggests that literacy involves freedom, memory, and communication. Generally, any definition of literacy needs to be situation specific where it becomes applicable to a certain group in a particular context.

Roles of the Tutor and Learner

This section includes a description of role theory, interview studies of tutor roles, literature on learner roles, and personal/professional characteristics of tutors.

Role Theory

The literature concerned with role theory focuses on self identity which is a large component of how a relationship between tutor and learner is viewed and directly affects the learner's role. As described by Deutsch and Kraus (1965), "In the process of interaction with his social environment a person not only takes on characteristics as a consequence of the roles he enacts, he also begins to experience a sense of self" (p. 181). This interpretation of one's role emphasizes the need to understand the learner's role in relation to the tutor-learner dynamics. The learners bring perceptions of themselves and their tutors into the relationship, which influences their behavior and attitudes in the tutoring process. The literacy learners' self perceptions influence each situation and are a factor which needs to be considered in assessing what constitutes their role.

James (1892) proposed that, "A man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind" (p. 182). This point speaks to the many different roles learners may enact and the

various ways others may respond. The learner may carry the others' perception of themselves and thus interfere with the tutor-learner relationship. The beginning level learners who experience low self-esteem may bring a negative self-image to the tutoring sessions, and this ultimately becomes inseparable from the role played by the learners. They view themselves as a low level learner, fulfil that role, and believe that others, including the tutor, see them in the same light.

Cooley takes the concept one step further in writing that "personality develops from social life and from communication among those sharing that social life" (as quoted in Ickes and Knowles, 1982, p. 202). In essence, the learner's personality is nothing more than the outcome of all the experiences of communication and interaction, including those experiences arising from exchanges with the tutor.

Similar to Cooley, Stryker (1981) addresses the impact of society on people and the roles they play as follows:

> Persons acting in the context of organized behavior apply names to themselves as well. These reflexively applied positional designations, which become part of the "self" create in persons expectations with respect to their own behavior. (Stryker, 1981, pp. 53-55)

Interview Studies of Tutor Roles

The first study reviewed was a British Broadcasting Corporation Radio Literacy campaign conducted between 1975-77 and later documented by Jones and Charnley (1978) in their book entitled Adult Literacy: A Study of Its Impact. They included input from the organizers, students, and tutors. A total of 400 questionnaires were administered to literacy tutors in England and Wales. Tutors were asked to complete the questionnaire on behalf of their students,

which lead to a low rate of return. Workers from thirty-five educational institutions involved in literacy were interviewed and each interview lasted two to three hours. The interview tapes were transcribed to include gestures, intonation, pauses, and other nonverbal clues.

Jones and Charnley (1978) found that the tutors developed their programs around the needs identified by the students, but they found a tendency for the learners to look to the tutor as one who knows all. According to the student, the tutor was the "fount of all knowledge in literacy" (Jones and Charnley, 1978, p. 85). The tutors perceived their roles as a series of activities, the most common being: providing the skills of reading and writing and raising the students' confidence. Many tutors made a distinction between the professional task of teaching the learners and merely helping someone to read. Some tutors identified their role as that of a counsellor or social worker, as seen in the following quotation: "He wanted me to do everything for him; find him a girlfriend, a new job, etc." (Jones & Charnley, 1978, p. 55). Other tutors saw their roles as requiring them to set boundaries, establish limits, and confine themselves to giving friendly advice or building confidence.

Jones and Charnley indicated that the students' perceptions of the tutors' roles were threefold. Firstly, they viewed the tutor as someone who should care about the students, pay attention to their needs and progress, and make them feel wanted. Secondly, the personality of the tutor was viewed as more important than the method of teaching or materials. Thirdly, the tutor was seen as someone who is approachable on a personal level and is able to keep things confidential.

In a second study, Brown (1982) conducted a survey of 11 adult educators and 48 tutors involved in one-on-one tutoring of English speaking adults in the United States. The purpose of this study was to link the

competencies and attributes of tutors with the development of effective pre-service training and interpersonal skills to sustain tutoring relationships. The adult educators and tutors were asked to rank 52 attributes and competencies needed by volunteer literacy tutors. A total of 35 items referred to personal and administrative responsibilities of the tutor, the psychology of the adult learner, and interpersonal relationships. The remaining 17 items dealt with the tutor's reading skills, assessment, and implementation of instruction. According to Brown, the most important competencies and attributes of the tutor included giving clear instructions, time on task, commitment to learning, and planning. The two competencies which were perceived as least important by tutors and adult educators in the study were knowledge of materials and knowledge of community resources.

The third study was conducted by the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (Hall, 1983) between 1981-82. It included 159 in-depth interviews of literacy volunteers and 864 questionnaires to participating adult educators involved in literacy tutoring in England and Wales. This in-depth study of volunteer adult educators was conducted over a span of one year. According to Hall, the roles of tutors in that study were based on the administrator's point of view and were divided into three overlapping areas: educational roles (teaching, tutoring, giving information, and giving advice); management roles (helping with program planning and recruitment); and operational roles (fund raising and helping with publicity). She generated a grid format of volunteer tutor roles and motivations where there are corresponding roles linked with the motivations of becoming a tutor. The grid is arranged with the tutor roles on one axis (teaching, management, operational) and the motivations of the tutor on the other axis (altruism, self interest, and sociability). Hall also highlights the crucial issue of whether professionals are

responsible TO the volunteer tutors, or responsible FOR the tutors. This suggests a potential power conflict between the administrators and the practitioners.

Lastly, Fingeret (1985), a researcher and writer in the field of literacy, carried out an in-depth study of illiterate adults based on unstructured interviews and participant observations with 43 adults in a medium sized urban setting in the USA. She approached the illiterate adults, as well as their families, friends, siblings, children, and neighbors. From the research findings, Fingeret emphasized the role of the tutor as a counsellor and co-learner who relates to the learner as individuals-in-networks. She found that illiterate adults create social networks which include readers and non-readers, and this in turn, has implications for literacy programs, especially in the context of one-on-one literacy tutoring. Moreover, Fingeret found that many illiterate adult students do not fit the traditional stereotypical image of a dependent, incompetent person. According to the adult learners, they perceived the desired tutors' role as one which minimized the risks of alienation when working in various literacy programs and activities. They generally saw themselves as interdependent, where they possessed other skills that their friends and neighbors relied on.

Other Literature on Tutor Roles

Mace (1979) indicates that learners often perceive the tutor's role as that of a social worker. The notion of the tutor taking on the role of a social worker was commonly found in the literature. In a Literacy Handbook (1988) prepared for public libraries by the New York library system, tutors are advised that:

> As reading teachers, they should stick to their specialty and avoid becoming involved as a marriage counsellor, psychiatrist, or banker. Tutors can best provide help in these other areas by being supportive and by developing a positive self concept and esteem in the student. (Mid-York Library System, 1988, p. 12)

Shrapnel (1974) explains that the social work approach implies that students are inadequate in one way or another. It sees the teacher's job as adjustment; it risks expecting little learning and settling for the performance of limited tasks. It also risks fostering dependence and reinforcing the student's vision of himself as inferior. Following this approach, there is no need for structures other than the protected class or one-to-one pair because the students' isolation is not seen as a part of the problem.

In contrast to the social work model, Shrapnel discusses the political approach which sees the student as one who has been deprived of a right. The role of the tutor, according to this approach, is to set objectives which have no limit and to strive for education which raises the level of consciousness. From this perspective, the tutors' roles are to foster the independence and wholeness of the student. The idea within Shrapnel's political approach is in line with Freire's teachings of education for liberation, which emphasize conscientization. How the student is perceived is fundamental to the tutors' perceptions of their role in literacy tutoring. The following quote distinguishes the political approach from the social work approach: "My students seem to me to HAVE problems, not to BE problems" (Shrapnel, 1974, p. 9). Paralleling Freire's education for liberation is Pratt's (1982) viewpoint that the role of the volunteer tutor is sometimes seen as being politically oriented with the main objective being to raise the skills and consciousness of the illiterate population.

Long (1982), relying on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, emphasizes the role of the ABE /Literacy tutor in providing instruction at the upper end of the

hierarchy (social and self-actualizing aspects of the learners). Long argues that too many instructors and programs are oriented toward emphasizing needs at the lower end of the hierarchy. He believes that the role of the literacy tutor coincides with Paulo Freire's teachings of liberation, that is to provide the chance for disadvantaged adults to grow and self-actualize. Long feels that the students may see the tutors' role as providing skills which satisfy the lower end of Maslow's hierarchy such as the functional reading and writing skills. But, the primary objective of the instructor and tutor should be to help students expand their horizons and encourage self-fulfillment.

Concerning the tutor-learner interaction, Mace (1979) and Currie (1985) agree that the style of teaching and subject areas addressed are a joint responsibility of the tutors and the learners. Currie also emphasizes that it is the role of the tutor "to show her students different things I have enjoyed--poetry and stuff. Literacy isn't just functional. It's a lot more" (Currie, 1985, p. 3). Currie strongly believes that the student-tutor relationship should be that of "co-explorers" (1985, p. 3). Her main thrust in one-to-one literacy tutoring is for the tutor to express an interest in the student, provide encouragement, and raise the level of confidence. Similarly, Hall's (1983) study indicated that there was a sense of equality between the tutors and students, since they both participate as volunteers. This idea was pursued by Mace (1979) from her personal experience where she found that "the consciousness of the other one making efforts spurred each of them to put in more of herself. There was a two-way pull" (p. 31).

Specific tutor roles were also delineated in the publication entitled The Right to Read (Webber, 1983). Organized by Frontier College's SCIL program (Student Centered Individualized Learning), The Right to Read is a user's guide which presents the tutors' roles from an administrator's point of view. Webber

identifies four main roles of the tutor as follows: behaving professionally, not creating false hopes and expectations, defining the relationship between tutors and learners, and being prepared for "the range of possibilities in the inevitable gap between life and needs of tutors, and life and needs of students" (1983, p. 45).

The role of the teacher in lifelong education, be it literacy, adult basic education, or another context, is viewed by Cropley (1977) as twofold, that of a co-learner and a guide-facilitator. The teacher is living in the same changing society and also experiencing adjustments. Cropley stressed the need for teachers to act as resource people, and not simply to impart knowledge.

In an article concerned with literacy in Thailand, Harman (1987) emphasized the role of the tutor being to motivate the learner in two ways: initial motivation to stimulate the learner, and sustained motivation to maintain the interest of the learner. Harman's perception of the tutor's role in motivating the learner may suggest more involvement than that proposed by Cropley.

Finally, a variety of literacy training manuals include formal job descriptions for volunteer tutors and occasionally for learners. Tutor roles expressed in the job descriptions were found to be concrete and succinct. In many instances, a one-page job description covered the tutor's qualifications, personal characteristics, duties and responsibilities, terms of the contract, expectations, and benefits. A common theme found among the job descriptions was the tutor's responsibilities of maintaining a tutor-learner relationship, communicating with the learner, being able to motivate others, and providing encouragement (Armstrong & Hunt, 1982, p. 77; Mid-York Library System, 1988, p. 16; Brandt, 1985, p. 37; Wichita Public Schools, 1985, p. 131; Lane, 1984, pp. 135-137; Hakanson & Gunderson, 1986, p.61; Outman, 1984, p. 13).

Personal and Professional Characteristics of Tutors

McMinnis (1974) identifies two basic categories of personality characteristics and skills which are required of the potential literacy tutor. She has devised a checklist of features for each category. The personality features are broken down into three areas: personal qualities, personal abilities, and personal approach. Personal qualities include a sense of humor, sensitivity, strength of character, ability to accept and rise to challenge, and adaptability (McMinnis, 1974, p. 39). Personal abilities include being able to set value on others, read non-verbal communication symbols, accept the adult student as an adult, and tolerate/accept/integrate/identify with other value systems and lifestyles (McMinnis, 1974, p. 39). Lastly, the personal approach refers to clarity of personal expression, astute perception of student needs, and the ability to devise acceptable methods of approach (McMinnis, 1974, p. 39).

According to McMinnis, the two categories of skills required for tutors are acquired personal skills and acquired methodological skills. The former focuses on informality of approach, skilled and easy interpersonal relations, ability to set value on the student's work, ability to allow the student to teach himself where appropriate and progress at his own speed, and the ability not to become over protective to the student (McMinnis, 1974, p. 40). The latter refers to accuracy in definition of the students' needs, accuracy in testing students' motor ability, suitable choosing of subject matter, ability to find appropriate learning and teaching methods, adequate ability in reading and writing skills, and the ability to present a written assessment of the student (McMinnis, 1974, p. 40).

The topic of interpersonal relationships was discussed by Brown (1982). Tutors felt the most important aspects were avoiding derogatory remarks, being

tactful and courteous, developing students' self-confidence, and listening perceptively. Brown (1982),in her section on psychology of the adult learner, emphasized that tutors need to establish a trusting atmosphere, engage in cooperative learning, and be aware of the learner's inadequate self-image. The tutors ranked social and economic factors as the least important in dealing with psychology of adult learners.

Professional characteristics referenced in job descriptions were also available from handbooks of North American adult literacy organizations. In particular, the following literacy programs/organizations were used: Volunteer Reading Aides (Lane, 1984), Community Education Adult Right to Read Program (Outman, 1984), Vital Guidelines: Tutor Training for an Adult Literacy Program (Armstrong and Hunt, 1982), Manual for Literacy Site Managers (Brandt, 1985), and Handbook for Coordinators of Volunteer Literacy Programs (McKenzie, 1987). The job descriptions often refer to the important personal characteristics as enthusiasm, communication, sense of humor, patience, dependability, tolerance, and willingness to clarify and explain aspects of reading and writing.

Davison (1969) divides the ABE teacher's characteristics into three categories on a professional level: knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Knowledge refers to having an understanding of the subject matter and the andragogical process of learning. The second category includes attitudes towards working with illiterate adult learners, concerns in testing and evaluating students, and the ways in which the teacher/tutor chooses to motivate the learner. The third category refers to the skills required in teaching illiterate adults.

Roles of the Learner

While little research has focussed on the role of learners in volunteer programs, information provided by literacy programs indicated that the job descriptions for learners differed in the amount of responsibilities to be assumed by the learner. The most commonly mentioned responsibilities were the tasks of regular attendance, participation and effort, commitment, and respect towards the tutors, staff and others. Of particular interest is the job description from the Right to Read which included having the student plan or help plan lessons and bring materials as part of the learner's responsibilities. The extent of the learner's responsibility is seen in the portion of the contract signed and guaranteed by the learner as follows:

> You are responsible for your own learning. Improving your reading takes more than just showing up. Ask questions, bring up issues that are important to your learning, and make an effort to do the homework. Read and write as much and as often as you can. The best way to improve skills is to use them. (Brandt, 1985, p. 38)

Nature of Adult Learning

Overall, adult education can be characterized by "flexibility in time, place, content and techniques of learning and hence calls for self-directed learning, sharing of one's enlightenment with others, and adopting varied learning styles and strategies" (Dave & Cropley, 1978, pp. 35-36). This may be more representative of adult learning from the tutor's than learner's perspective. Gross (1977) equated adult learning with lifelong learning and believes that "Lifelong learning means self-directed growth" (p. 16). According to Knox (1977), a principle aspect of adult learning involves "personal pacing". "The

optimal learning performance is more likely when learners can proceed at their own pace" (Knox, 1977, p. 411).

Theorists and practitioners of adult education commonly emphasize the importance of relevant and practical learning. Knowles (1980) uses the term "performance centered" referring to the learner's desire to apply learning to real life. Similarly, Knox (1977) stresses that "The adult's motivation and cooperation in the learning activity is more likely when the tasks are meaningful and of interest to the learner" (p. 411). In addition, Knox believes that adults approach learning with specific expectations. This has major implications for learning objectives and adult curricula in general.

In addition to being performance centered, within the model of andragogy (Knowles, 1980) adult learning is viewed as independent, experience based, and improved on a readiness to learn. The readiness to learn is often described as the teachable moment. An underlying theme in the practice of adult education is that learners and teachers have a mutual responsibility for the teaching-learning transaction. The teacher or tutor is more of a facilitator of the learning process. Some of the implications for practice from andragogy include establishing a positive learning climate where the learner feels at ease and involving the learner in the planning process as well as evaluation.

Chickering (as quoted in Cross, 1981) introduces adult learning by distinguishing between "maintenance learning" and "innovative learning." The former refers to the traditional education model which maintains the status quo. In contrast, innovative learning is described as bringing change, renewal, and solving problems. He also believes that participation is a key consideration in adult learning. In discussing participation, Chickering emphasizes that

"Participation is more than the formal sharing of decisions; it is an attitude characterized by cooperation, dialogue, and empathy" (Cross, 1981, p. 7).

The literature reviewed in the area of psychology of adult learning included some well known concepts and theories. Whitbourne and Weinstock (1979) regard adult learning in the context of events and changes in identity as adults progress in life. As the adult's social situation changes and he/she faces a crisis, this precipitates the need to achieve equilibrium. Similarly, Havighurst (as quoted in Knowles, 1986, p. 52) explains the educational needs of adults being closely related to the tasks specified within each of the three adult developmental stages: early adulthood, middle age, and later maturity.

Jones (1981) draws a parallel between Havighurst's Developmental tasks and the motivations of illiterate adult learners. He perceives the role of the tutor as someone who incorporates the learners' needs with the developmental stages most relevant to the learner. He emphasizes the need to provide functional skills in a meaningful context. In addition, Jones applies the concept of the teachable moment. The tutor must be aware and sensitive to the learner's needs which are meaningful and relevant. As an example, the student may be interested in learning to read the Bible in preparation for a rite of passage. This clearly reaches beyond the functional level and includes the psychological stage of the adult.

In discussing learning theories, James (1984) included the use of multi-sensory techniques as effective when dealing with adults. Sensory integration has been explained as the degree to which individuals interact with their environment and the effectiveness in processing information derived through the senses. The argument holds that adult learning can be enhanced by increasing the number of senses used in the process.

In the computer based adult literacy program known as Operation Storefront, the project coordinator outlined some adult learner characteristics. Among those discussed were the following: " adults are more realistic, adults have concrete and immediate needs, and adults attend classes and programs often with a mixed set of motives-educational, social, recreational, and sometimes out of a sense of duty" (Teal, 1989, p. 11). The adult learner profile portrayed by Operation Storefront is a combination of ideas from various authors in the field.

Summary and Implications for the Study

Definitions of literacy appear to be centered around the individual or based in society. Depending on the perspective chosen, the purpose and context of literacy differs. Although reasons why literacy is important vary to a great extent among authors, there is a common thread expressing the need for several aspects such as functional, societal, and personal to be considered.

The perceived roles of the literacy tutor range from traditional teacher to innovative facilitator. Discrepancies exist in terms of how much motivation, evaluation, planning, personal involvement, and independence the tutor should provide. In relation to desirable personality traits of tutors, a wide range of characteristics have been suggested based on both opinion and research.

Literature in the area of adult learning identified the importance of meaningful learner participation, joint evaluation, personal pacing, and practical application to the learning. Knowles' (1980) model of andragogy states that adult learning is performance centered, practically applied to the situation, independent with a high degree of motivation, achieved when there is a readiness to learn, and able to draw upon a wide base of experience.

The literature base constructed in this chapter reinforces the need for a study to clarify some of the ambiguity and lack of consensus in establishing the role of the tutor. At most, a handful of researchers have consulted with learners as to how they perceive the role of the tutor and which personal characteristics they feel are important for tutors.

CHAPTER 3

The Design of the Study

This chapter describes the construction of the questionnaire, selection of the sample, administration of the instrument, and the procedures used to analyze the data.

The Survey Instrument

The construction of a survey instrument arose from a lack of existing materials to measure the role of the literacy tutor as perceived by both the tutor and the learner. Since there was no specific instrument in place, the task of designing the questionnaire was a significant aspect of this study. This section describes the process used in the development of the questionnaire, including the stages of refinement.

Construction of the Questionnaire

In this section, the sources used and steps involved in constructing the questionnaire on Literacy Tutors' Roles are described.

Sources

1. Books on literacy campaigns with surveys in appendices were examined to obtain content for the questionnaire. Several surveys have concentrated on reasons why illiterate adults decide to learn to read and write. The categories were adapted and expanded to fit the questionnaire. Similarly, literature has highlighted tutor characteristics and these were listed as simply as possible.
2. Questionnaires and surveys constructed by other researchers were examined in relation to their format.

3. Related literature on role theory, adult literacy, adult education, teaching-learning principles, and volunteerism was surveyed to obtain further content for the questionnaire.

4. Consultations were held with committee members, a Literacy program coordinator, a statistician, and colleagues prior to pilot testing the instrument.

Construction of the Items. From the above mentioned sources, the questionnaire was organized into the following five sections: demographic data; reasons for learning to read and write; tasks and responsibilities of the tutor; tasks, responsibilities, and relationship of the tutor-learner; and the importance of personal characteristics of tutors. (See a copy of the questionnaire in Appendix).

1. Demographic Items

The following demographic questions were based on a questionnaire designed by the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE) and administered to volunteers in adult education programs in England and Wales (Hall, 1983). The age ranges were adopted, as were questions about previous tutor training. The section entitled "reasons for being a tutor" was expanded by adding the following two categories: desire to be creative and desire to learn more about the area of literacy. One question regarding employment was changed slightly from "houseworking" to "working in the home" (Hall, 1983, p. 114).

2. Items on Literacy Learning

The first item (Question #1) was open-ended and dealt with the importance of learning to read and write. This question was aimed at a candid

response of the importance of literacy with as little bias as possible. The intent was to gain an answer which was not influenced by other questions asked throughout the questionnaire.

The second item (Question #2) required participants to rank various reasons for learning to read and write according to importance. The eight statements comprising question #2 came from a variety of sources. Harman (1987) groups together personal and social issues in looking at reasons for learning to read and write. It was felt that these were two separate items and were presented as items (a) "for one's own purpose" and (h) "to be involved in the community." Jones and Charnley (1978) view item (h) as falling under the categories of "Social Opportunity and Social Interaction." Harman (1987) and others in the field of literacy have also written extensively about functional reasons for becoming literate. This notion is included in item (b) "as a basic need for survival." The functional notion of literacy also includes occupational issues as indicated in item (d) "to find employment". Jones and Charnley (1978) label this category "Vocation." What Harman (1987) refers to as Literacy as a Value is presented as literacy as a human right in item (c). Literacy as a value is interpreted as something which society holds as important and is embedded in certain institutions. Pratt (1982) also wrote about the concept of literacy as a right, the argument being that present tutor roles and functions foster literacy as a privilege, not a right. Finally, the notion of literacy as a human right is part of the Frontier College philosophy (Webber, 1983, p. 9). Freire's (1973) notion of literacy for empowerment is reflected in (f) "to gain power and try to change one's situation." Scribner's (1984) article entitled "Literacy in Three Metaphors" focuses on literacy for adaptation, power, and state of grace. Literacy for adaptation is inferred in Item (g) "to help people fit into society."

3. Items on the responsibilities and tasks of tutors

Question #5 attends to specific tasks and responsibilities of the tutor. On a five-point Likert scale participants are asked to indicate the degree to which a tutor should assume a responsibility (all, most, some, not much, or none of the time).

The responsibilities of the tutor fall under the three areas of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, taken from common adult education principles. Items (a) and (b) focused on practical knowledge namely using learners' home and job experiences in the lessons. The third item (c) involved learning skills out in the community. The National Council on the Aging, Inc. recently published a manual entitled "Organizing A Literacy Program For Older Adults, Literacy Education for the Elderly Project (LEEP)" (Jacobs, 1986). One of the responsibilities of tutors and peer support groups mentioned was to "involve the students in other types of learning experiences like field trips, learning games or interactions with others" (Jacobs, 1986, p. 55). The fourth item (d) was centered on the organizational skill of planning sessions ahead of time. The last two items dealt with attitudes of tutors towards learners. Jones and Charnley (1978) emphasized item (f) by the following quote; "Frequently is reference made, by tutors and others, to the importance of raising the student's confidence and this was often seen as the most notable single advance made by him" (p. 67). Currie (1985) also stressed the need for the tutor to express an interest in the student, provide encouragement and raise the level of confidence. Similarly, Long (1982) strongly believes that tutors must be sensitive, encouraging and praise their students often to ensure success.

Questions #6 and #8 in the survey offered participants a chance to add information on other roles of tutors and learners not addressed in the survey.

4. Items on the tasks, responsibilities, and relationship of tutor-learner

Question # 7 listed various aspects of the tutoring relationship and provided a 5 point scale (all the tutor's job, mostly the tutor's job, shared, mostly the learner's job, all the learner's job). The eight statements focused on such aspects as motivation, evaluation, leadership, setting the learning pace, and bringing materials. Participative decision-making is one of the key components to the adult learning model, and was reflected in items (c) "decide the speed of learning," (f) "decide what should be learned," and (h) "determine evaluation." The first item (a), "choosing interesting/meaningful topics," closely resembles the LEEP manual's "tailoring lessons to individual needs and interests" (Jacobs, 1986, p. 54). The fifth item (e) focused on bringing materials to the tutoring sessions. Jones and Charnley (1978, p. 96) found that "the resource materials, as seen by the students, were simply what the tutor produced week by week and the students hardly ever knew where they had come from. The tutor knew what was good for them and provided it: theirs not to reason why." The seventh component (g), "suggesting a change if an activity is too easy or too hard," was adapted from LEEP's "notifying the tutor coordinator if problems arise and or when tutoring sessions end" (Jacobs, 1986, p. 54). Veall (1974) referred to this as an open and flexible structure where "it should be possible for students to request a change (either of teaching situation, method, timing etc) and have this responded to" (p. 79), and, "if one system is inefficient and the information flow is poor, then the system should be reviewed and changed" (p. 79). The sample job description of a literacy tutor within the LEEP manual included in the tutor's responsibilities "periodically evaluating the student's progress," item (h) in the questionnaire (Jacobs, 1986, p. 54).

Question #4 was included on the basis of literature regarding the relationship between tutor and student, often focusing on the notion of

indebtedness. Authors such as Shrapnel (1974) have identified the role of the tutor as sometimes being that of a social worker. Jones and Charnley (1979) made a clear distinction between teaching and helping someone to read when interviewing tutors and learners for their study. They found many "testimonies to the satisfaction of the personal relationship that was developing between tutor and student" (Jones and Charnley, 1978, pp.65- 66). Hall (1983) reported that there is a sense of equality between tutors and students since they both participate as volunteers. The idea of equality is also embedded in this question.

5. Items on the personal characteristics of tutors

Question #9 dealt with the personal characteristics of tutors several of which were adapted from McMinnis (1974) features of the personality of tutors. In many cases the wording was simplified. Modifications included changing "tolerant" to item (f) "able to accept other people's values" (McMinnis, 1974, p. 39), and "adaptable" to item (b) "flexible" (p. 39). Specific traits such as sensitivity, empathy, and sympathy were combined to form the more general characteristic item (k) "understanding." In several instances the descriptors were adequate and needed no revisions such as item (a) "sense of humor," item (c) "accept a challenge," item (d) "read non-verbal communication," and item (e) "express themselves clearly" (McMinnis, 1974, p. 39). Mace (1979) found Literacy Coordinators believe that a major component of the tutor's role is to understand the learners' feelings of frustration and humiliation attached to being illiterate. Charnley and Jones (1979, p. 70) found that item (g) "patience as a desirable personality trait was directly mentioned by nearly 70 percent of the tutors." The trait (h), dependability, is an adaptation of Charnley and Jones

commitment and responsibility. Also taken from the LEEP manual was Item (i), "show excitement" which was derived from "enthusiasm" (Jacobs, 1986, p. 12). More specifically, the manual goes on to emphasize, "Dedicated, enthusiastic tutors are the keys to student's involvement once they have enrolled" (Jacobs, 1986, p. 12). The LEEP manual also included the characteristic of (l) "creative teaching methods" as part of the requirements of a tutor (Jacobs, 1986, p. 14).

Pilot Study

The organizations and individuals used for piloting the questionnaire operated under similar guidelines to those chosen for the study, that is their mandate dealt with matching tutors and learners on an individual basis and providing ongoing support and feedback. The people involved in the pilot study were not involved in the main study. The instrument was first piloted on March 22 and the time required to complete the questionnaire was recorded. Respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire and later comment on the clarity of the items.

A total of five tutors and four learners were included in the piloting of the instrument over a two week span, with revisions made after each pilot session. The questionnaire underwent extensive changes which included simplifying the descriptors, changing the ranking scales, deleting two questions which were ambiguous, modifying the order of questions, changing the type of font, and changing the format to allow for more space in the open-ended questions.

Revision of the Questionnaire

Major changes

1. The first two items on the questionnaire originally asked respondents to rank various reasons for learning to read and write, and then asked for other

reasons. The responses from the pilot tests indicated that participants felt every reason was very important and could not think of other reasons for people learning to read and write. The order of questions #1 and #2 was then reversed and more information was obtained from the participants.

2. The importance of Question #3, a forced ranking of the three most important reasons in Question #2, was evident in the pilot stages, where most participants indicated that all the reasons were very important. Participants were requested to identify the three most important reasons for learning to read and write.

3. Initially, the tasks in questions #5 and #7 were similar; #5 asked the degree to which the tasks should be the tutor's responsibility, and #7 asked the degree to which they should be the learner's responsibility. Later, one list was used and the scale reflected a percentage of the time the tasks should be shared between the tutor and learner (shared 100%, shared 75%, shared 50%, shared 25%, not shared at all). This did not reveal whose job the tasks should be if respondents felt they should not be shared. (i.e., if they were not to be shared, we could not assume that they were to be all the tutor's job, or all the learner's job). It was also noticed that the list of tasks could not be mirrored in terms of learner's responsibilities and tutor's responsibilities. Some of the tasks did not appear to be common to both the learner and tutor. Finally, the items were divided into those tasks to be performed by the tutor (question #5), and those which could be performed by both the tutor and learner (question #7). On question #7, participants were asked to indicate how much of the responsibility should be taken by tutors and learners. The final ranking system used was a starred scale with five choices which included: all the tutor's job, mostly tutor's job, shared, mostly learner's job, all learner's job. This scale was easy to

understand and yielded information about whose responsibility the tasks should be, and how much responsibility each partner should take.

4. Statements which contained more than one idea or meaning were rewritten in order to provide a clear message to the participants. For example in question 9, item (b), which originally included adaptability and flexibility, the descriptor adaptability was omitted. Similarly, question 9, item (h) initially combined reliability and dependability in the same statement.

Minor changes

1. The ranked scale was modified slightly with the third choice on the scale "neutral" being changed to "no opinion."

2. A number of words were used to simplify the meaning of items such as replacing gain employment with find; function with live, motivate with keep the interest of, educator with teacher, and compliments with praise.

3. Item (h) was changed from "to participate and contribute to society" to the existing "to be involved in the community."

4. Respondents were asked for the three most important characteristics of tutors rather than five, as it was too lengthy a list to be read back and remembered by the learners.

5. Statements which included the words "should" and "must" were reworded to be less evaluative.

6. Vague descriptors and pronouns like "some" and "them/their" were avoided.

7. In the following three instances, items were deleted due to ambiguity or irrelevance: item 5 (h) "to know how to teach and know about different subjects," 5 (i) "to offer advice to the learner," and 5 (j) "to take a personal interest in the lives of the learners.",

8. Item #7 (g) which originally read "notify the tutor if an activity is not working" was changed to read "to suggest a change if an activity is too easy or too hard."

Validation of Instrument

The instrument was validated as part of the pilot study. The ranked questions were checked for variety in responses. The open-ended items were read to ensure that participants answered the specific questions. In addition to the pilot groups, the instrument was critically reviewed by three individuals--a colleague, a committee member, and a faculty member.

Selection of the Sample

One group of participants involved in this study was selected by the coordinator of the program creating the potential for bias in the selection of the sample. In the other two programs, coordinators provided access to names of tutors who were then approached by the researcher. Because confidentiality and sensitivity were recognized as important factors in conducting research in this field, random selection of the sample was not possible.

Thirty-two pairs of volunteer literacy tutors and adult learners formed the sample for the study. Tutors and learners were selected from a large urban center and surrounding area. All of the literacy programs are involved in one-on-one literacy tutoring. The administration of the questionnaire spanned over five weeks.

In addition to being strictly voluntary, a second condition of participation in the study was a minimum of two months tutoring experience for both the tutor and learner. The attraction to take part in the study was the valuable

contribution to research in the field and the hope of improving tutor training and matching tutors and learners in one-on-one literacy organizations.

Collection and Analysis of the Data

Collection of the Data

Initial contact with coordinators of literacy programs in the large urban center was made in early February 1990, and contact with the other organizations outside the city came later in March. Documentation outlining the study was provided and the participating coordinators were supportive of the project. The approach taken to inform and receive consent of the participants was handled differently by each literacy coordinator. In one instance, the coordinator preferred to provide the researcher with a list of pre-called tutors who had spoken with their learners and agreed to participate in the study. In the other two cases, the coordinators supplied lists of potential tutors and requested the researcher to make the initial phone calls, provide the background information, and seek consent. The coordinators held a great deal of respect for participants in their programs, due to the confidentiality and sensitivity of the topic area, and at no time gave the researcher access to names of learners who had not been informed by their tutors or given their consent.

Once consent was obtained, individual appointments were set up with the thirty-two pairs of tutors and learners. The most common arrangement was to administer the questionnaire during the usual meeting time and location for the weekly/bi-weekly tutorials. This seemed to be the most convenient time for both the tutors and learners. Generally, the locations selected were at the home of the tutor or learner, or a public/college library. Most of the libraries were equipped with smaller work rooms which offered privacy.

The researcher requested the questionnaire be administered to both tutors and learners concurrently, allowing the tutor to fill out the questionnaire in another location while the learner was guided through the instrument by the researcher. All learner responses were tape recorded. It was critical to make sure that the participants in the study felt free to answer in an honest way, with no interference. Having all three persons present at the beginning provided an opportunity to explain the process and intent of the study, answer any questions or concerns, and have the participants give written consent as well as have the tutor witness the consent of the learner. In addition, the risk of a low return was avoided since the researcher administered the instrument in person. It was explained that both questionnaires contained the same questions and that neither the tutors nor learners would have access to any of the information. At that point the participants were informed that a brief summary of findings would be forwarded to them in a matter of months. It was emphasized that names would be changed and any quotations which might reveal their identity would be omitted from the study.

Respondents were encouraged to answer each question and to take as much time as they required. In addition, they were free to review questions and change any answers. The average time required to fill out the questionnaire was thirty-five minutes for the learner and slightly longer (forty-five minutes) for the tutor. This difference is partly attributed to the time required for the tutors to think through and write out the answers for the open ended questions as opposed to speaking into a microphone.

Analysis of the Data

The data were analyzed separately for the two parts of the questionnaire namely, the demographic data, and the questionnaire items.

Those items in the questionnaire which provided numerical values or ranking scales were analyzed in terms of frequencies, means, and cross tabulations where appropriate. Tables of figures are used for reference.

Under the guidance of a computer consultant with the Centre for Research and Measurement in Education (CRAME) at the University of Alberta, the researcher coded the information items on the questionnaire. Once this process was completed, the coded computer output was checked against the original questionnaires with the assistance of a person unrelated to the study. An error rate of .556 % was discovered in the input process and subsequent corrections were made by the researcher. The last step involved running the SPSSx statistical program, which ultimately yielded the questionnaire information in a variety of forms.

Procedure used to analyze demographic data (Part I).

The first part of the questionnaire focused on demographic information about tutors and learners. Data concerning participants' age, marital status, birthplace, level of education, employment, previous literacy involvement, and reasons for being involved in literacy were collected and reported by use of tables and paragraph descriptions.

Procedure used to analyze the open-ended responses (Part II).

For the first questionnaire item, "Why do you feel it is important to learn to read and write?" the researcher transcribed the learner's responses and then compiled a list of the various reasons given. In the tutor's case, the list was extracted directly from their questionnaires. The lists provided the specific reasons for learning to read and write which later became the basis for more general categories.

Procedure used to analyze responses to structured questionnaire items (Part II).

The first step in the analysis of the structured questionnaire items was to separately calculate the frequencies and means for the tutors and for the learners. This allowed the researcher to access information about tutors, learners, and tutor-learner pairs.

The initial five-point scale was used to derive frequencies. Participants were reluctant to use the full scale values in responding to ranked questions. This may be explained as participants avoiding the use of negative themes in their responses. When inadequate representation for all five values occurred, the five-point scale was collapsed into the following three-point scales:

1. "important," "no opinion," "not important";
2. "all/most of the time," "sometimes," "not much/none of the time"; and
3. "all/mostly the tutor's job," "shared by both," "all/mostly the learner's job."

The Chi-square statistics were not used in this study, as the expected frequencies must be greater than five in each cell and this was not always the case.

CHAPTER 4

Findings of the Study

The results and discussion of information from the survey organized in five parts, are presented in this chapter. In the first part, demographic information about the respondents is presented. In the second section, reasons why tutors and learners feel it is important to learn to read and write are presented and discussed. In the third part, views of the tutor's role are examined. The fourth section is concerned with various responsibilities of tutors and learners. The last section deals with the tutor's personal characteristics.

Demographic Characteristics of Tutors and Learners

As indicated in Table 4.1, most tutors were female, married and between the ages of 35 and 44, with the average age being 38.5 years. Approximately two in three tutors were born in urban centers and over 90% were native English speakers. Over one quarter of the tutors obtained a Grade 12 level of education, an additional 25% had Grade 12 plus some higher education courses and another quarter had between two and four years of college or university education.

The proportion of male and female learners was approximately evenly split, and just over half the learners were married. The largest age group was 25 to 34, comprising one-third of the learners. The average age for learners in this study was 30 years. About 60% of the learners were born in urban centers and close to 60% had English as their first language. Approximately half of the learners possessed less than a Grade 9 education, while 40.7% had some high school, including nearly 19% in special education programs.

Table 4.1

Demographic Characteristics of Tutors and Learners

Characteristic	Tutors N	Tutors %	Learners N	Learners %
Gender				
Male	4	12.5	17	53.1
Female	28	87.5	15	46.9
Marital Status				
Single	6	18.6	12	37.5
Married	18	56.3	18	56.3
Divorced/Widowed	8	25.0	2	6.3
Age				
17-24 years	0	0.0	7	21.9
25-34	6	18.6	10	31.3
35-44	14	43.8	6	18.6
45-54	5	15.6	5	15.6
55-64	6	18.6	4	12.5
>65	1	3.1	0	0.0
average age	38.5		30.0	
Birthplace				
urban	22	68.8	19	59.4
rural	10	31.3	13	40.6
First Language				
English	30	93.8	19	59.4
French	0	0.0	3	9.4
European	1	3.1	4	12.5
Asian	0	0.0	1	3.1
Other (Arabic)	1	3.1	5	15.6
Level of Education				
no education	0	0.0	1	3.1
less than Grade 9	0	0.0	17	53.1
Grade 10-11	3	9.4	5	15.6
Grade 12	9	28.1	2	6.3
Grade 12 & extra courses	8	25.0	0	0.0
Special education	0	0.0	6	18.6
1 year College or Uni.	1	3.1	0	0.0
2 years Higher Ed.	4	12.5	1	3.1
4 years	4	12.5	0	0.0
Teacher's Degree	2	6.3	0	0.0
Other (Graduate Level)	1	3.1	0	0.0

Education of Respondent's Parents and Spouse

Information regarding the education level of the respondent's parents and spouse is presented in Table 4.2. Approximately one-third of the tutors reported that their mothers had less than a Grade 9 level of education (N=10, 31.3%). An additional 21.9% of their mothers had obtained their Grade 12 High School Diploma. The percentage of tutors' mothers who had gone on to further their education was 19.8% (N=6), including two teachers (N=2, 6.3%). With regards to the tutors' father's level of education, approximately one-third had also obtained less than grade 9 (N=10, 31.3%). Another five fathers had obtained Grade 12 (15.6%), and those who pursued postsecondary education numbered 3 (9.4%). For the tutors, none of their spouses had less than Grade 9 level of education. Nine had attained Grade 12, and four (12.5%) had completed two years of higher education. Finally, four spouses in total had completed 4 year university degrees, and one had pursued Graduate programs.

In reference to the learners, over half of the mothers had less than a Grade 9 level of education (N=18, 56.3%). Those learners' mothers who had completed their Grade 12 education totaled five (15.6%). In the case of the learners' fathers, half (N=16, 50%) had less than Grade 9 education, and 18.6% (N=6) had obtained Grade 12. One of the learners' fathers had pursued higher education and possessed a 4 year university degree. For the spouses, five (15.6%) had less than a Grade 9 level of education. Seven of the learners' spouses had achieved a Grade 12 education (21.9%). There were three spouses who had gone on to further education, of which one completed a 4 year university degree.

Table 4.2

Education of Respondent's Parents and Spouse

	Mother's Education				Father's Education				Spouse's Education			
	Tutor		Learner		Tutor		Learner		Tutor		Learner	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No Education	0	0.0	3	9.4	0	0.0	2	6.3	0	0.0	2	6.3
< Grade 9	10	31.3	15	46.9	10	31.3	14	43.8	0	0.0	3	9.4
Grade 9	0	0.0	2	6.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.1
Grade 10-11	5	15.6	3	9.4	5	15.6	5	15.6	3	9.4	4	12.5
Grade 12	7	21.9	5	15.6	5	15.6	6	18.6	9	28.1	7	21.9
Grade 12 plus other courses	2	6.3	0	0.0	1	3.1	0	0.0	1	3.1	1	3.1
2Yrs Post-secondary Ed.	1	3.1	0	0.0	1	3.1	0	0.0	4	12.5	2	6.3
4 Yrs Post-secondary Ed.	3	9.4	0	0.0	2	6.3	1	3.1	4	12.5	1	3.1
Teacher's Certificate	2	6.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.3	0	0.0
Graduate Courses	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.1	0	0.0
MissingData	2	6.3	3	9.4	4	12.5	4	12.5	8	25.0	11	34.4

Employment

The categories used for the employment breakdowns were taken from the Standard Occupation Classification codes from Statistics Canada (1980). As shown in Table 4.3, the breakdown of full-time and part-time workers was identical for both the tutors and learners. Full-time workers accounted for approximately half the respondents (46.9%) and part-time workers were the second largest group (12.5%). More tutors (12.5%) than learners (3.1%) fell into the retired category, and nearly 13% of the learners were unemployed.

The occupation categories for the tutors and learners were quite different with a higher concentration of tutors holding jobs in the white collar classification (See Table 4.4). The most common employment category for the tutors was clerical (18.6%) followed by managerial/administrative (15.6%). Other common classifications included social sciences (9.4%), teaching (9.4%), sales (9%), and artistic/literary occupations (9.4%).

As shown in Table 4.4, the largest employment category for the learners was service occupation (34.4%). The next most frequent forms of employment were transport equipment (9.4%), machining (6.3%), construction (6.3%), and clerical (6.3%).

Prior Involvement in a Literacy Program

A very small percentage of tutors had worked for another tutoring agency (N=3, 9%). Those who had previous tutoring experiences had been involved for a period of six to 12 months. Two of the respondents had tutored for a private organization and the remaining one respondent had tutored for a public continuing education institution.

Exactly half (N=16) of the learners had been in another literacy program. As indicated in Table 4.5, the learners had been involved in the programs for

Table 4.3

Employment Status of Tutors and Learners

	Tutors		Learners	
	N	%	N	%
Employed Full-Time	15	46.9	15	46.9
Employed Part-Time	4	12.5	4	12.5
Working at Home	1	3.1	4	12.5
Retired	4	12.5	1	3.1
Studying Full-Time	1	3.1	2	6.3
Studying Part-Time	0	0.0	0	0.0
Unemployed	0	0.0	4	12.5
Retired & Working at Home	2	6.3	0	0.0
Working Part-Time & Working at Home	2	6.3	0	0.0
Working at Home & Studying Part-Time	1	3.1	0	0.0
Unemployed & Studying Part-Time	0	0.0	1	3.1
Unemployed & Studying Part-Time	1	3.1	1	3.1
Working Part-Time & Studying Part-Time	1	3.1	0	0.0

Table 4.4

Occupations of Tutors and Learners

Occupation	Tutor		Learner	
	N	%	N	%
Clerical	6	18.6	2	6.3
Managerial, Administrative	5	15.6	1	3.1
Sales	3	9.4	0	0.0
Artistic, Literary, Recreational	3	9.4	0	0.0
Social Sciences	3	9.4	0	0.0
Teaching	3	9.4	0	0.0
Transport Equipment Operator	1	3.1	3	9.4
Service	1	3.1	11	34.4
Farming, Horticulture	1	3.1	1	3.1
Natural Sciences, & Engineering, Mathematics	1	3.1	0	0.0
Other Crafts and Equipment Operator	0	0.0	1	3.1
Machining	0	0.0	2	6.3
Construction Trades	0	0.0	2	6.3
Processing	0	0.0	1	3.1

various durations ranging from three months to three years, with the most common period of time being four to six months. When asked what literacy program they had attended previously, 44% of these learners indicated that they had attended full-time programs in an adult education centre. Literacy classes at community schools were identified by approximately 25% of the learners. Part-time evening classes of English as a Second Language were referred to by nearly 19% of the respondents, and finally, other part-time Academic Upgrading programs were mentioned by approximately 13% of the learners.

Table 4.5

Duration of Learners' Previous Tutoring Experience

Length of Time	N	%
1-3 months	3	9.4
4-6 months	6	18.6
6-12 months	1	3.1
1-2 years	3	9.4
2-3 years	1	3.1
3-4 years	2	6.3
Total	16	50.0

Tutor Training

All except one of the tutors had received some training. The most common type of training was a short term in-house workshop (91%). One respondent had taken extra courses through a university or college to prepare her for tutoring in addition to an in-house workshop.

Time Tutors Spent in Preparation

As indicated in Table 4.6, the hours tutors spent preparing each week for the tutoring sessions ranged from zero to three. Half of the tutors indicated they used between 30 minutes to one hour for preparation time per week. The number of contact hours tutors spent with the learners ranged from 1 to 5 hours per week with most spending two hours per week.

Table 4.6

Hours Tutors Spent Preparing for Sessions and in Contact with Learners

	Preparation Time		Contact Time	
Hours	N	%	N	%
0.0	2	6.3	0	0.0
0.5	8	25.0	0	0.0
1.0	8	25.0	2	6.3
1.5	7	21.9	7	21.9
2.0	3	9.4	15	46.9
2.5	1	3.1	3	9.4
3.0	2	6.3	1	3.1
4.0	0	0.0	1	3.1
4.5	0	0.0	1	3.1
5.0	0	0.0	1	3.1

Reasons for Being Involved in Tutoring

The tutors and learners were asked to indicate their reasons for being involved in tutoring (as tutor/tutee). Respondents were given a list and were asked to check all of the reasons which were true for them. The researcher did

not anticipate the extent to which this question would overlap with data from the following section. For this reason, results on this question are omitted to avoid repetition.

Reasons for Learning to Read and Write

Results on the Open-ended Question

When asked about their reasons for learning to read and write in an open-ended format, each respondent gave at least one reason. In order to analyze this information, all the responses were listed individually and then the following categories were developed by noting similarities and differences among the responses:

1) employment,
2) personal/self development,
3) social interaction,
4) communication/understanding,
5) children's/grandchildren's benefit,
6) leisure, and
7) functional daily living.

Category 1 referred to finding a job, improving one's job, or being able to financially support oneself. This heading also included subcategories such as being underpaid, opening up one's own business, filling out reports related to the job, and planning a career. Category 2 included personal abstract reasons relating to self esteem. More specific statements within this category were feeling secure and positive, being happier, feeling confident and proud, and being treated fairly. Category 3 differed in that the focus was more societal and emphasized understanding and being able to communicate orally, interacting with others, articulating oneself, socializing, and being a part of society.

Subheadings found in category 3 were feeling isolated or bored, and being able to volunteer and join in community activities. Category 4 dealt with understanding mediums of communication such as television, letters, books, magazines, and news items. This specifically referred to understanding print in today's society. Category 5 encompassed reasons for the benefit of children or grandchildren such as being able to help with their school work or serving as a role model. Category 6 pertained to leisure and recreational goals which resulted in relaxation or enjoyment. This category was distinguished from category 4 in that while some of the same types of material were involved, they were read for enjoyment rather than information. Some of the subheadings in this category included enjoying one's retirement and travelling with ease and confidence. Category 7 included functional activities found in daily life such as being able to do one's shopping, writing cheques, reading recipes, locating information in telephone books, paying bills, and making budgets.

The number of responses given by tutors and learners for the seven categories are presented in Table 4.7. The table is organized in descending order based on the total occurrences for tutors and learners. Also presented are the occurrences as viewed separately by the tutors and the learners.

As indicated, the most frequently identified reason for learning to read and write was employment, when tutors and learners were grouped together. Within their own groupings, tutors expressed personal/self-development as the most frequent occurrence and for learners it was the functional daily living category. The second most common category for both groups was personal/self-development, and functional daily living ranked third. The fourth most frequent reason for learning to read and write fell under the leisure category. The next two categories were mentioned by both groups an equal number of times and these were personal/social-development and

communication/understanding. The last category mentioned in terms of frequency was reading and writing for the children's/grandchildren's benefit. Fewer tutors (N=3), than learners (N=10) mentioned this category.

Table 4.7

Occurrences for Learning to Read and Write Categories

Category	Total N	Tutors N	Learners N
employment	34	18	16
personal/self-development	33	20	13
functional daily living	30	12	18
leisure	27	17	10
social interaction	24	15	9
communication/understanding	24	15	9
children's/grandchildren's benefit	13	3	10

Besides differences in the number of responses given by tutors and learners in each of the seven categories in Table 4.7, there were other qualitative similarities and differences in the reasons they gave for learning to read and write. In general, learners identified specific and often functional uses for reading and writing. The tutors had more abstract notions of the importance of reading and writing. Some of the following examples help illustrate these distinctions. Tutor's typically referred to general concepts such as "grow and develop," "make choices and control their lives," "realize one's full potential," "discover new worlds," and "gain an understanding of the world around us." Learner's frequently responded with specific statements such as "not to be

underpaid," "embarrassing if you cannot read and write," "be happier," "carry on a conversation," "fill out forms," and "to be able to read with my spouse."

Occasionally, the tutors' responses were simply an elaboration of the learners' statements. This type of elaboration is partly due to the command of the English language, as the fundamental idea is the same. A reason mentioned by learners was "to get a good job," and tutors stated "for purposes of job advancement and job enhancement." A similar example is the statement "to fill up my time," which can be compared with "to enjoy relaxation and promote personal enjoyment." Finally, the tutor's reason of "learning about Canada in order to obtain citizenship" is an expansion of the learner's purpose of "immigration."

In some instances, the same responses were cited by both the tutors and learners. Examples of agreement in statements are as follows; "to be more independent," "to help children with their homework," "to be able to take courses," and functional tasks including accessing banking machines, following directions, and assembling equipment. The response "communication" was also given by both groups.

Results on the Likert Scale

Participants were asked to rate the importance of each of the eight reasons for learning to read and write listed in Table 4.8. The first six reasons in the table deal with individual situations, whereas the last two items focus more on society. As seen in the Appendix, a five-point Likert scale was used in the instrument. The categories were later collapsed into the three-point scale found in Table 4.8. The column to the left indicates the responses from tutors, and the right hand column reveals responses from learners.

Table 4.8

Reasons for Learning to Read and Write

Reason	Tutors						Learners					
	Important		Neutral		Not Important		Important		Neutral		Not Important	
Individual Reasons	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
(a) one's own purpose	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1
(b) basic survival	29	90.6	0	0.0	3	9.4	25	78.1	1	3.1	6	18.6
(c) human right	29	90.6	1	3.1	2	6.3	25	78.1	5	15.6	2	6.3
(d) employment	30	93.8	1	3.1	1	3.1	25	78.1	2	6.3	5	15.6
(e) live independently	27	84.4	2	6.3	3	9.4	28	87.5	0	0.0	4	12.5
(f) gain power & change situation	28	87.5	2	6.3	2	6.3	29	90.6	1	3.1	2	6.3
Societal Reasons												
(g) help people fit into society	24	75.0	4	12.5	4	12.5	25	78.1	4	12.5	3	9.4
(h) be involved in community	22	68.8	5	15.6	5	15.6	27	84.4	1	3.1	4	12.5

According to the tutors, the reasons for learning to read and write related to individual situations were consistently ranked important: between 84.4% and 96.9% of the tutors suggested the first six items were important. This pattern may suggest that reasons which are centered around the individual's lifestyle are perceived as more important than those concerning the larger society. The two societal reasons, items (g) and (h), were rated important by smaller percentages--75.0% and 68.8% tutors respectively.

Nearly 97% of the learners felt that learning to read and write for one's own purpose was important. They also tended to view living independently (87.5%) and gaining power (90.6%) as important but the other individual reasons were relatively less important. There tended to be slightly more occurrences marked less important for learners (total of 27 occurrences) than for tutors (total of 21 occurrences). Specifically, six learners (18.6%) ranked reason (b), "learning to read and write as a basic need for survival" as not important. These learners may have felt that they already were surviving even though they lacked certain reading and writing skills. The concept of learning to read and write "as a human right" seemed vague and abstract to the learners, which may account for one of the lowest rankings (N=25, 78.1%) and relatively large neutral category (N=5, 15.6%). And finally, five learners (15.6%) felt that it was not necessary to learn to read and write to find employment. Of the five respondents who rated "to find employment" as less important, four were employed full time. In light of the proportion of learners who were employed full-time (46.9%) and part-time (12.5%), it may be interpreted that the learners in this particular sample felt they could find employment with their existing level of reading and writing skills. Of the two societal reasons, more learners ranked being involved in the community (84.4%) than fitting into society (78.1%) as important.

Overall, when comparing tutors and learners there tended to be a high level of agreement for reading and writing for the following reasons: one's own purpose, gaining power, and living independently. Tutors generally rated individual reasons higher than learners. And learners appeared to place more importance on societal reasons than did tutors.

Results on the Ranking Task

Since participants generally felt each reason for learning to read and write was important, an additional question was designed to require participants to rank those reasons which were most important. When asked to rank the three most important reasons from among the eight reasons presented (see Table 4.9), item (a) "for one's own purpose" was ranked most frequently in the top three by both tutors (N=23) and learners (N=23). There was disagreement regarding the second and third most important reason for tutors and learners. The tutors ranked learning to read and write as "a basic need for survival" (N=17) and "to live independently" as next in importance (N=17). The learners, on the other hand, indicated that "to find employment" was second in importance (N=14) and their third ranked reason was "to be involved in the community" (N=13).

In light of the figures presented in Table 4.9, it may be suggested that the tutors chose reasons for learning to read and write which would prepare learners for everyday living and empower them. Whereas the learners appeared to select reasons which were operational such as finding employment and being involved in the community. When comparing item (e) "live independently," there is little agreement between tutors and learners. Living independently may be considered empowering and important to tutors. In contrast, independence may be isolating to learners and empowerment may be stem from being part of a community.

Table 4.9

Three Most Important Reasons For Learning To Read and Write

Reason	Total		First Most Important		Second Most Important		Thrid Most Important	
	Tutor N	Learner N	Tutor N	Learner N	Tutor N	Learner N	Tutor N	Learner N
(a) one's own purpose	23	23	11	17	7	4	5	2
(b) basic survival	17	11	8	2	7	5	2	4
(c) human right	8	7	3	0	2	4	3	3
(d) find employment	12	14	2	1	5	6	5	7
(e) live independently	17	6	2	4	5	1	10	1
(f) gain power & change situation	16	11	5	2	4	4	7	5
(g) help people fit into society	3	8	1	3	2	3	0	2
(h) be involved in community	0	13	0	2	0	4	0	7

Comparison of Reasons on Open-ended, Likert, and Ranking Tasks

When comparing results on questionnaire items #1, #2, and #3, several similarities and differences were noted. These three questions in the survey inquired about the reason for learning to read and write in the following formats: open-ended, Likert rating, and selecting the three most important reasons. Both tutors and learners indicated that reading and writing for one's own purpose was most important on the Likert rating and on the ranking task (Tables 4.8 and 4.9). This seemed to be interpreted by tutors as personal/self development and by learners as functional daily living on the open-ended task (Table 4.7). Reading and writing for the purpose of employment was consistently viewed as the second most important item by tutors for the open-ended question as well as the Likert rating. Similarly, learners felt that employment ranked second in importance for the open-ended item as well as the ranking task. While most of the other reasons were also considered to be important at least by some of the respondents, there was less agreement across tasks or between learners and tutors on these.

How Participants View Tutors

When given the choice of friend, guide, teacher, or partner, learners were asked to indicate how they thought of their tutors, and tutors were asked how they viewed themselves. Multiple responses were not permitted in this question. Some of the participants wanted to select more than one option as they felt the tutor played a combination of roles. In this case, the researcher asked the respondents which term described the way they thought of the tutor or themselves most of the time.

The row totals presented in Table 4.10 reveal the perceptions tutors held of their roles. While many tutors thought of themselves as guides (N=13,

Table 4.10

Agreement in Tutor Role Perception by Tutors and Learners

	As Perceived By Learners				
	Friend	Guide	Teacher	Partner	TUTORS
As Perceived By Tutors					
Friend	4	0	5	0	9 (28.1%)
Guide	4	2	5	2	13 (40.6%)
Teacher	2	0	3	0	5 (15.6%)
Partner	1	0	3	1	5 (15.6%)
	11 (34.4%)	2 (6.3%)	16 (50.0%)	3 (9.4%)	32
	LEARNERS				

40.6%) or friends (N=9, 28.1%), fewer tutors perceived their roles as teachers (N=5, 15.6%) or partners (N=5, 15.6%). The tutors seemed reluctant to select "teacher" as their role in the tutor-learner relationship. This may reflect how tutors defined the word "teacher." One tutor commented that he did not think of himself as a teacher since there was only one student.

The column totals in Table 4.10 report the learner's perceptions of the tutor's role. Half of the learners viewed their tutors as teachers (N=16, 50.0%). The next most common perception of the tutor was that of a friend (N=11, 34.4%). The terms "guide and partner" were rarely selected by the learners as a viable response to this question. A total of five learners selected these options. One explanation may be the unfamiliarity of these words, or their uncommon usage in daily language. The term "guide" was used to denote a relationship where the tutor suggested and allowed the learner to make decisions, mistakes, and observations. The emphasis of the word "partner" was the aspect of equality and partnership. Although these terms were explained to the learners at the time, there may have been some hesitation to select these options in the survey.

In general, there was little agreement among the tutor-learner pairs as indicated along the diagonal in Table 4.10. As the figures on the diagonal show, a total of 10 tutor-learner pairs agreed in their perception of the tutor, and the other 22 pairs did not agree. Of those pairs in agreement on the tutor's role, the most common perception was of the tutor as a friend (N=4, 12.5%) followed by teacher (N=3, 9.4%), guide (N=2, 6.3%), and finally partner (N=1, 3.1%).

Tutor Responsibilities

This section of the questionnaire asked participants to think about the six responsibilities listed in Table 4.11 and to indicate how often they felt the tutor

Table 4.11

Tutor Responsibilities

	Tutors						Learners					
	All/Most		Some		Not much/None		All/Most		Some		Not much/None	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
CONTENT												
(a) include learner's home experiences	13	40.6	17	53.1	2	6.3	8	25.0	11	34.4	13	40.6
(b) include learner's job experiences	7	21.9	22	68.8	3	9.4	8	25.0	13	40.6	11	34.4
(c) include field trips in the community	0	0.0	17	53.1	15	46.9	6	18.6	6	18.8	20	62.5
PROCESS												
(d) plan sessions ahead of time	28	87.5	2	6.3	2	6.3	22	68.8	8	25.0	2	6.3
(e) make the tutoring sessions relaxed	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1	21	65.6	5	15.6	6	18.8
(f) raise learner's confidence by giving praise	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1	19	59.4	10	31.3	3	9.4

should perform each. As in the previous section, the scale used in the instrument was a five-point Likert scale which was subsequently reduced to a three-point scale for analysis. In Table 4.11 the panel of data on the left contains the number and percentage of tutors who responded all/most, some, and not much/none for each of the six responsibilities. The second panel presents the number and percentage of learners who responded to how often the tutor should assume the same six responsibilities. The first three responsibilities listed in Table 4.11 are concerned with the content of the tutoring sessions. The last three tasks deal more with the process of tutoring.

When rating responsibilities which dealt with content of the sessions, tutors most frequently rated these as responsibilities they should perform some of the time. However, the last three responsibilities which focused on process were identified by tutors as ones they should carry out all or most of the time. As shown in Table 4.11, almost all of the tutors indicated that all or most of the time they should plan sessions ahead of time (N=28, 87.5%), make tutoring sessions relaxed (N=31, 96.9%), and raise learner's confidence by giving praise (N=31, 96.9%). They suggested that home and job experiences should also be included, but on a limited basis. They were less clear about field trips, with about half (N=15, 46.9%) indicating that they did not view field trips as part of the tutor's responsibilities.

Learners, too, indicated that planning, making them feel relaxed, and giving praise should be the tutor's responsibility, with more than 80% indicating that tutors should be involved in these activities at least some of the time. They were somewhat less sure about how frequently learner's home and job experiences should be included in lessons. Like the tutors, there was less support for including field trips; nearly 63% of learners (N=20) did not feel this should be part of the tutor's role.

The differences between the tutors and learners with respect to these responsibilities may be accounted for by the different roles and, correspondingly, knowledge the two groups assume when planning and developing lessons. Generally, tutors felt that they should assume process responsibilities more often and to a larger extent than those dealing with context or content. In agreement, learners indicated that tutors should assume process responsibilities more of the time. Concerning content responsibilities, neither group placed much emphasis on these as part of the tutor's role, but tutors viewed them as more important than did learners.

The open-ended question asking participants to list other roles of the tutors was Questionnaire item #6. Responses obtained to this question are listed in Table 4.12. The additional responsibilities presented by tutors fell into four categories: supportive activities, supplying and identifying appropriate materials, promoting learners abilities and developing skills, and helping with cultural aspects. The support responsibility included serving as a listener, advocate, role model, and storyteller. In relation to supplying appropriate materials, tutors felt they should make an effort to utilize learners' favorite subjects, current affairs, and good literature. This also included using materials provided by learners. The third responsibility identified by tutors was promoting learners' abilities. Tutors felt it was their responsibility to help learners become more independent, develop sound study skills, and interpret information. And finally, tutors felt they should include decoding cultural mysteries.

The additional responsibilities for tutors suggested by the learners fell into five categories: supportive activities, providing more reading and writing opportunities, providing practically-based opportunities, providing personally-based opportunities, and being knowledgeable about accessing material. The supportive responsibility focused on the tutor being more available, being a

Table 4.12

Other Activities as Part of Tutors' Roles

Activities Suggested by Respondents	Number of Occurrences
As Suggested by Tutors	
Supportive Activities	24
Supplying & Identifying Appropriate Materials	22
Promoting Learners' Abilities and Developing Skills	9
Decoding Cultural Mysteries	4
As Suggested by Learners	
Supportive Activities	16
Providing More Reading and Writing Opportunities	9
Providing Practical Opportunities for Literacy	4
Providing Personal Opportunities	4
Accessing Materials	3

friend, and being patient and flexible. Learners felt it was the tutor's responsibility to emphasize the reading and writing component by working on dictation, sentence structure, and pronunciation. The practical opportunities for literacy tutors could provide included filling out forms, reading gas bills, and understanding recipes. The personal opportunities for literacy suggested by learners centered around socializing and included spending a long weekend together, and going out to restaurants and movies. The last category outlined the expectation for tutors to judge good material and inform learners on how to access those materials. Comparison of the two sets of responses suggest that there is considerable agreement between tutors and learners with respect to additional responsibilities suggested for tutors.

Division of Tutor-Learner Responsibilities

In item #7 on the questionnaire, respondents were asked to consider the eight specific responsibilities listed in Table 4.13 and assign each responsibility to the tutor, learner, or both. This question was ranked on a five-point scale, later revised to a three-point scale. As in the previous question, the left most column in Table 4.13 represents the ratings of tutors. The right hand column represents the responses from learners.

Generally, the tutors felt that most of the responsibilities listed should be shared with the learner, but seldom the learner's responsibility alone. One exception to this pattern was item (c) the task of deciding the speed of the learning which tutors considered to be partially the learner's responsibility (N=10, 31.3%). The two items tutors felt were primarily their responsibility were item (b) "to be in control of the sessions" (N=19, 59.4%) and item (d) "to keep the learner interested" (N=22, 68.8%).

Table 4.13

Tutor - Learner Responsibilities

	Tutors		Tutors Tutor-Learner		Learners		Learners Tutors		Learners Tutor-Learner		Learners	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
(a) choose meaningful topics	11	34.4	18	56.3	3	9.4	13	40.6	15	46.9	4	12.5
(b) control sessions	19	59.4	13	40.6	0	0.0	23	71.9	9	28.1	0	0.0
(c) decide the speed of learning	7	21.9	15	46.9	10	31.3	10	31.3	14	43.8	8	25.0
(d) keep learner interested	22	68.8	10	31.3	0	0.0	14	43.8	11	34.4	7	21.9
(e) bring materials	15	46.9	15	46.9	2	6.3	16	50.0	13	40.6	3	9.4
(f) decide what should be learned	8	25.0	20	62.5	4	12.5	9	28.1	19	59.4	4	12.5
(g) suggest a change if an activity is not working	12	37.5	17	53.1	3	9.4	9	28.1	14	43.8	9	28.1
(h) decide how much has been learned	12	37.5	17	53.1	3	9.4	25	78.1	4	12.5	3	9.4

Similar to the tutors, the learners indicated that approximately half of the tasks should be a shared responsibility. Some of the learners felt that they had responsibility for items (c) "decide the speed of the learning" (N=8, 25.0%), (d) "keep the learner interested,"(N=7, 21.9%) and (g) "suggest a change if an activity is not working" (N=9, 28.1%). The majority of learners felt that the tutor should have the responsibility for item (b) "control sessions" (N=23, 71.9%), and item (h) "decide how much has been learned" (N=25, 78.1%).

There were some similarities in how participants viewed the division of responsibilities. Both tutors and learners agreed that the tutor should control sessions item (b), and keep the learner interested item (d). The shared responsibilities included items: (a) choosing meaningful topics, (c) deciding the speed of learning, (f) deciding what should be learned, and (g) suggesting a change if an activity is not working.

The differences in opinions focused on two items: (e) bringing materials, and (h) deciding how much has been learned. Learners tended to feel that it should be more of the tutor's responsibility for bringing materials. Also, most of the learners indicated that deciding how much has been learned should be the tutor's responsibility while tutors felt it should be a shared responsibility.

Respondents were asked to identify other roles of learners in open-ended format (Questionnaire item # 8). Both tutors and learners responded to this question similarly, with the exception of an additional category mentioned by the learners. Table 4.14 illustrates the categories and occurrences for additional learner responsibilities.

Several tutors felt that a responsibility of learners should be to show interest in and outside of the tutoring sessions. This referred to learners actively participating and interacting while they were with their tutors and also on their own. Secondly, tutors felt strongly about learners giving them feedback. It was

Table 4.14

Other Activities as Part of Learners' Roles

Categories of Activities	Number of Occurrences As Suggested by Tutors	As Suggested by Learners
Showing Interest in and outside of sessions	16	8
Giving Feedback to Tutors	13	5
Being Responsible about meeting tutoring sessions	9	1
Doing their Homework	8	8
Taking Responsibility for their own learning	7	7
Expressing needs, setting short term goals	3	3
Repaying tutors by doing them favors	0	1

heavily stressed that learners should communicate any difficulty they have with the materials and tutoring sessions in general. Thirdly, tutors mentioned the responsibility learners had for showing up to their sessions on time and not cancelling their appointments. Fourthly, the learner's academic responsibility was discussed. Tutors stated that learners should do their homework and take the time to practice their reading and writing skills. As a fifth category, tutors emphasized the need for learners to take responsibility for their own learning. The sixth category referred to the responsibility learners had for expressing their needs. It was felt that the learners' needs should take priority over what the tutor had planned. The tutors also felt that learners should set short term goals and help generate the curriculum by bringing forth their problems for discussion.

The learners identified the six above mentioned responsibilities as well as repaying the tutors in some possible way. According to the learners, the first responsibility was interpreted as picking up books at the library, doing things for themselves, being mature and contributing as much as possible, and being more involved in helping their tutors. The second responsibility was explained as being able to tell tutors if they were going too fast or if something was too difficult. The third responsibility included being punctual and not missing sessions. The fourth responsibility involved spending more time studying, reading what the tutor asked, memorizing more words, and repeating what they had learned. The fifth responsibility was interpreted as keeping themselves interested in the material and trying to comprehend what was going on. The sixth responsibility was viewed as being realistic about goals and not being overwhelmed by feelings of frustration or guilt. Finally, learners felt they should repay their tutors and do favors for them once they were able to.

Personal Characteristics of Tutors

For questionnaire item #9, participants were asked to rate 12 personal characteristics according to importance (See Table 4.15). The follow-up question in this section (questionnaire item #10) required tutors and learners to identify the three most important characteristics from the list of 12; the results on this item are presented in Table 4.16.

Each of the 12 characteristics listed in the survey was rated important on the three-point scale by the majority of tutors (90.6% to 96.9%). Similarly the majority of learners (71.9% to 100%) rated the 12 characteristics as important (See Table 4.15). The consistency in responses is partially due to the positive descriptors used in this question. The two characteristics which learners coded as less important were items (f) "accept other people's values" (N=23, 71.9%) and (d) "read non-verbal communication" (N=25, 78.1%). In addition, one-quarter of the learners indicated that item (f) was unimportant (N=8). Accepting other people's values was used to signify tolerance and open-mindedness of various lifestyles, beliefs, and ways of learning. The ability to read non-verbal communication referred to the tutor's intuitive skill of using the learner's facial expressions and gestures as clues of the learning process.

As shown in Table 4.16, the tutors indicated that two most important characteristics in the list of 12 were items (e) "express themselves clearly"(N=15), item (g) "be patient" (N=17), and item (k) "be understanding" (N=15).

The learners ranked item (e) "express themselves clearly," as the most important tutor characteristic (N=21). Other characteristics commonly selected by learners included item (g) "be patient," (N=13) item (a) "have a sense of

Table 4.15

Personal Characteristics of Tutors

Characteristic	Tutors						Learners					
	Important		Neutral		Not Important		Important		Neutral		Not Important	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
(a) have a sense of humor	29	90.6	2	6.3	1	3.1	29	90.6	0	0.0	3	9.4
(b) be flexible	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1	28	87.5	2	6.3	2	6.3
(c) accept a challenge	30	93.8	1	3.1	1	3.1	30	93.8	1	3.1	1	3.1
(d) read non-verbal communication	30	93.8	1	3.1	1	3.1	25	78.1	2	6.3	5	15.6
(e) express themselves clearly	30	93.8	1	3.1	1	3.1	32	100	0	0.0	0	0.0
(f) accept other people's values	30	93.8	0	0.0	2	6.3	23	71.9	1	3.1	8	25.0
(g) be patient	30	93.8	0	0.0	2	6.3	31	96.9	1	3.1	0	0.0
(h) be dependable	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1	31	96.9	1	3.1	0	0.0
(i) show excitement	29	90.6	2	6.3	1	3.1	28	87.5	3	9.4	1	3.1
(j) have self-confidence	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1	29	90.6	2	6.3	1	3.1
(k) be understanding	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1
(l) be creative	30	93.8	0	0.0	2	6.3	32	100	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 4.16

Three most Important Personal Characteristics of Tutors

Characteristic	Total		First Most Important		Second Most Important		Third Most Important	
	Tutor	Learner	Tutor	Learner	Tutor	Learner	Tutor	Learner
(a) have asense of humor	7	11	1	5	1	2	5	4
(b) be flexible	13	2	4	0	7	1	2	0
(c) accept a challenge	3	8	1	3	0	2	2	3
(d) read non-verbal communication	6	7	0	3	1	1	5	3
(e) express themselves clearly	16	21	8	8	4	8	3	5
(f) accept other people's values	8	2	4	0	3	1	1	1
(g) be patient	17	13	8	4	6	4	3	5
(h) be dependable	8	6	0	2	4	2	4	2
(i) show excitement	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
(j) have self-confidence	0	10	0	3	0	5	0	2
(k) be understanding	15	10	4	3	5	4	6	3
(l) be creative	2	6	0	1	1	2	1	3

humor," (N=11) item (j) "have self-confidence," (N=10) and item (k) "be understanding" (N=10).

In comparison, tutors and learners agreed on tutor characteristics such as item (e) expressing themselves clearly, item (g) being patient, and item (k) being understanding. Those characteristics which tutors ranked important but learners did not agree were items (b) flexibility, and (f) tolerance - accepting other people's values. And finally, those characteristics which learners felt were important and tutors were not in agreement included: (j) having self confidence and (c) accepting a challenge.

Summary

On the demographic variables, the typical tutor was female, married, 35 to 44 years of age, born in an urban area, a native speaker of English and employed in a clerical or administrative occupation. Learners were both male and female, married, 25 to 34 years old, born in urban centres, native speakers of English and employed in service industries. The education levels of tutors , as well as their parents and spouses, were generally higher than those for learners. Few tutors had worked for another tutoring agency and half of the learners had been involved in other literacy programs.

Three types of questions were used to determine reasons for learning to read and write. Both tutors and learners rated reading and writing for one's own purpose as highly important on all three questions. Employment was also considered an important reason for learning to read and write by participants in this study.

In relation to how the roles of tutors are viewed, there was little agreement between tutors and learners. Learners viewed tutors as teachers but tutors viewed themselves as friends and guides. Both tutors and learners

felt that tutors should assume responsibility most of the time for process aspects of sessions including planning, making learners feel relaxed, and giving praise, but placed less emphasis on the tutor's responsibility for content aspects of the sessions. Both groups also indicated that tutors should be supportive of learners. In relation to the sharing of responsibilities by tutors and learners, both groups generally felt that while most responsibilities should be shared with learners, tutors should assume more responsibility than learners for most of the items listed. Both groups also indicated that learners should show interest in and outside of the tutoring sessions.

When asked to rate the importance of personal characteristics of tutors, all 12 characteristics listed were rated as important by the majority of both learners and tutors. On the ranking task, being able to express themselves, being patient, and being understanding were selected by both tutors and learners as important personal characteristics.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

This chapter provides a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings presented in chapter 4. The discussion focuses on major findings and themes from this study, and how these relate to other research. This chapter includes the conclusions reached and implications to consider in terms of volunteer literacy tutors' roles. Finally, areas for further research are identified.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the desired literacy tutors' roles as viewed by adult learners and volunteer literacy tutors. The lack of an existing instrument provided the rationale for construction of a questionnaire concerned with the perception of the role of the literacy tutor. The content of the questionnaire was based on literature selected from the broader areas of the nature of literacy and adult learning, as well as interview studies and opinion articles addressing the role of literacy tutors.

The structured questionnaire was administered to 32 tutor-learner pairs who were involved with one-on-one literacy tutoring in a large urban center and surrounding area. The same questionnaire was given to tutors and learners and the only difference was that learners responded to the questionnaire orally. The format of the questionnaire required participants to rank and order statements as well as respond to open-ended items. Questions regarding demographic data were included to describe the sample and assist in interpreting the questionnaire items. The analysis of the data included

statistically determining frequencies, means, and cross tabulations for numerically based responses. Open-ended data were analyzed according to general themes arising from participants' responses.

Discussion of Major Findings and Conclusions

Importance of Learning to Read and Write

When asked why it was important to learn to read and write in an open-ended question, the three most commonly identified reasons provided by tutors were personal/self-development, employment, and leisure. Learners most frequently referred to functional living, employment, and personal/self-development.

One interpretation of these findings may be that tangible, everyday issues such as one's job and ability to function in society are crucial elements. Although 46.9% of learners were employed full-time and a further 12.5% employed part-time, many expressed general dissatisfaction with their employment and were interested in eventually upgrading their employment skills. As indicated in the breakdown of occupations, most of the positions held by learners fell into service and vocational trade categories. Moreover, 71.8% of learners were under the age of 44, which is a most employable group. Thus it seems that the learners' age along with their desire to strengthen their job opportunities appeared to be significant motivation for adult learners in this study to improve their ability to read and write.

The importance of personal, self-development was also advanced by both tutors and learners as a reason for adults requesting tutoring. From the learner's point of view, personal and self development was translated into "being happy," and "feeling good about oneself." This aspect of literacy describes the basic need inherent in all human beings. According to Maslow's

hierarchy of needs (as quoted in Lefrancois, 1985, p. 313), these elements may suggest the satisfaction of needs which Malsow explains as belongingness, love, and self-esteem.

Those participants who felt strongly about learning to read and write for the purpose of improving functional daily living represented a cross section of learners. The category of functional skills was applicable to each participant regardless of age, marital status, employment status, or first language. By dealing more effectively with the demands of daily life in terms of filling out forms, reading recipes, following directions, and writing out cheques, the learners would be fulfilling many of the other categories of reasons as well, such as personal development, communication, social interaction, leisure, and employment.

A less common reason selected for learning to read and write was for the benefit of one's children or grandchildren. Since the age of learners ranged from 17 to 64, it is quite possible that children or grandchildren were not a part of their lives. For those participants who did have children, this finding may suggest that few participants lived in the vicinity of their children or grandchildren. Also worth consideration is that approximately half of the learners were under 35 years of age, and although they may have had young children, literacy was not yet a concern. As apparent in the demographic information, over 50% of the learners' mothers and fathers obtained less than a Grade 9 level of education. Several learners mentioned that the first time they visited a pubic library was with their tutor.

When asked to rate and choose from a list of eight reasons for learning to read and write, tutors and learners both identified reading and writing for one's own purpose as the most important reason. Indeed, reasons related to individual situations were generally rated as more important than those

concerned with society. One explanation for individual situations being more important to learners is the difficulty of accomplishing literacy tasks without support systems, such as spouses (which was the case for just over half the participants), parents, children, or friends. The need to become literate may be more urgent when one is not surrounded by other people to assist. Similarly, social networks and involvement in the community also provide an important support system. It is interesting to note that 84.4% of the learners indicated that they felt it was important to learn to read and write in order to be involved in the community. Moreover, for the 43.8% of learners who indicated they were single, divorced, or widowed, the lack of support may be an even larger problem.

The interpretation of literacy "for one's own purpose" according to tutors was often explained as enjoying life, becoming more enlightened, and generally implied aesthetic benefits. On the other hand, learners viewed literacy for one's own purpose more as a move towards independence and autonomy. The learner's approach was more concrete, and certainly more immediate.

As evident in the demographic characteristics presented in Chapter 4, close to 20% of the learners had achieved between grades 10 and 12 level of education. When considering the number of learners who had experience in the public school system, their main reason for wanting to learn to read and write at this point in time may be for themselves, and not necessarily to upgrade in order to re-enter the school system. They have already been in school and it did not yield the results they desired. Any form of upgrading expressed by learners was in the context of employment and was skills related.

Tutor as Teacher, Learner with less Responsibility

When given the choice of friend, guide, teacher, or partner, tutors tended to view themselves as friends and guides whereas learners more often viewed them as teachers. Few tutor-learner pairs (a total of 10 pairs out of 31) agreed in the way they viewed the tutor. The tendency for tutors to be viewed as teachers by half of the learners may be closely related to other findings where tutors were expected to take a leading role in planning, controlling, motivating, and evaluating the learner within the tutoring sessions. The learners rarely acknowledged their role in assuming responsibility for various aspects of the tutoring process. One explanation for the learners' lack of involvement may stem from their previous tutoring experience. Half of the learners in the study had previous experience in either Academic Upgrading, English as a Second Language, or Literacy programs. These programs are comprised of classroom, group-oriented situations where the role of the tutor may be interchanged with that of a teacher, due to class size. The learners' experiences in these group settings may have carried over to the one-on-one tutoring situation. Tutor characteristics may also have contributed to learners viewing their tutors as teachers. The average age for tutors was almost 10 years older than that of learners, and only 9.4% of the tutors had less than a Grade 12 level of education. And finally, the underlying assumption that "teacher knows best" might have been at work. There is a often a tendency for students to consider the teacher as an expert. Several learners felt they should have minimal responsibility for choosing meaningful topics, controlling sessions, bringing materials, and deciding what should be and how much has been learned. In essence, the learners abdicated their responsibility possibly for reasons of lack of confidence, lack of initiative, individual preference, or other unknown

reasons. Perhaps more interesting is the fact that the tutors agreed with the learners that the learners should not take responsibility for controlling sessions.

Expectations and Roles of Tutor Viewed as Professional

As indicated by the results on the structured question, the learners' expectations of the role of the tutor focused on the process or professional aspects of literacy tutoring. Generally, participants felt that the tutor was responsible for relating to the learners' family or job experiences within the context of the tutoring sessions for only a small portion of the time. This type of involvement was seen to be appropriate in exceptional situations, but it was not the norm. Moreover, among pairs, it was the tutors who felt this should have been part of their responsibility. Participants appeared to have a sense of mutual respect for the others' time. In reviewing the demographic data, there were more female tutors (87.5%) and more male learners (53.1%). The ratio of male learners to female tutors may have contributed to the professional rather than personal orientation within the tutoring sessions. Also, personal involvement may not have been culturally appropriate for tutors and learners.

The representation of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners (40.6%) in the study may also have been a contributing factor to the type of role tutors play. The ESL learner group included participants who had been in Canada for various lengths of time ranging from six months to 20 years. Traditionally, newly arrived English as a Second Language students have the greatest need for orientation to the community, especially when support systems are not yet in place. Frequently, the learners remarked how busy their tutors were and how kind they were in taking the time away from their families, friends, and leisure just to help them. This reinforces the common theme in

volunteer literacy programs where learners are grateful for whatever is provided, since it is free.

The opportunity to express other comments was presented in questions #6 and #8 on the questionnaire. Specifically, participants were asked if there were any other responsibilities of tutors they felt should be included. The most common response was supporting the learner where the tutor acted as a role model, listener, and advocate. According to tutors, the second most common responsibility was identifying and supplying appropriate materials. Other responsibilities as viewed by tutors included promoting learners' abilities and developing study skills, and helping with cultural aspects. Learners identified the need for tutors to provide more reading and writing as well as a need for socializing. Those learners who did express more personal responsibilities for tutors, such as giving information about where to find jobs, how to go shopping, accompanying them to the library, and spending social time together, were largely ESL students.

When tutors were asked to comment on other learner responsibilities, both tutors and learners identified showing interest and enthusiasm both in and outside of the tutoring sessions as being important. Tutors felt that learners' should be responsible about meeting the tutoring sessions, expressing short term goals, and giving feedback concerning the pace and quality of the sessions. Several learners also felt it was their responsibility to do their homework, take responsibility for their own learning, be committed, and give feedback to tutors. One learner felt the role should also focus on repaying the tutor in some possible way.

Important Characteristics of Tutors

As highlighted in chapter 4, the most important characteristic for tutors as perceived by both tutors and learners was the ability to express themselves clearly. Expressing oneself clearly relates to a professional context as well as personal. This finding supports the learners' perception of the tutor's role as a teacher. A good teacher is commonly defined as one who can explain things well and pass on knowledge and skills.

In addition, personal-social development and communication were two of the seven categories arising from the open-ended question #1: "Why do you feel it is important to learn to read and write?" Communication referred to understanding print in society, whereas the former category included interacting with others and articulating oneself. The skill of expressing oneself effectively was identified as an important reason for learning to read and write by tutors and learners, as well as an admirable trait for tutors to possess.

According to the learners, having self-confidence was seen as an important personality trait for tutors. The underlying assumption may be that the tutors need to be confident in themselves so they can effectively tutor and encourage others. This trait fits closely with the image of the teacher's role.

Raising the learners' level of confidence was also viewed as a critical responsibility of the tutor, as 96.9% of the tutors indicated in the questionnaire that they should be focusing on encouraging and praising the learners all or most of the time. On the other hand, learners were less convinced (59.4%) of the necessity for tutors to praise them all the time. According to the figures, 31.3% learners were satisfied to be encouraged and praised by their tutors some of the time.

As one might expect, learners selected patience as one of the more important characteristic of tutors. For many adult learners the strict, inflexible,

and impatient teachers of their past were a reminder of failure. It may not be as important that the tutor show up on time or make the learner laugh, but being patient was seen to be a desirable characteristic.

Based on the findings, a relaxed and comfortable environment appeared to be an important dimension of the tutoring situation. Fostering a relaxed atmosphere was viewed as a component of the tutor's role by slightly more than half of the tutor-learner pairs.

The tutors' choice of flexibility and understanding can be interpreted in light of their self-perception. Tutor's saw themselves as guides (40.6%) and friends (28.1%) to their learners. The role of a friend is to be supportive and understanding. A guide serves to gently show one the way, assist one, and above all not impose his or her methods. The traits identified by learners did not differ much from those identified by tutors.

Conclusions

From the open-ended component in this study, the following seven reasons for learning to read and write were evident: employment, personal development, functional daily living, leisure, social interaction, communication, and for the benefit of children. From the structured questions on this topic, it could be concluded that reading and writing for one's own purpose was viewed as the most important reason by both tutors and learners.

In addition, it could be concluded from the research that literacy concerns expressed from the learners' perspectives were more specific and immediate. On the contrary, it was found that tutors' orientation was more abstract and vague. This phenomena became apparent in items relating to the importance and benefits of reading and writing.

It could also be concluded from this study that tutors and learners look to the tutor as the one responsible for many of the critical tutoring dynamics such as: setting objectives, controlling sessions, and evaluating the learner. The learners perceived tutors mostly as a teacher, although this was inconsistent with the tutor's self-perception. Other tutor roles focused on providing support and appropriate materials for learners to enhance reading and writing opportunities. Additional learner roles included showing enthusiasm and interest, providing the tutor with feedback, and doing the expected homework.

Another conclusion stemming from this study was the tendency for participants to perceive the tutor's role from a professional perspective, and somewhat removed from the learners' personal lives. In general, there were few incidents where personal involvement was either expected or desired by either group.

And finally, it could be concluded that important personality traits for tutors involved being able to express themselves clearly, being patient, understanding, and flexible. There was some degree of consensus in ranking of personal characteristics by tutors and learners.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Other Research

When comparing the demographic findings of this study to those presented in other studies and available statistics on adult literacy, several similarities become evident. Due to the small number of participants in this study (N=32 pairs), however, the demographic data may not be representative of a larger population and the researcher is unable to generalize to the population at large.

Using the 1976 census of metropolitan areas in Canada, Thomas (1983) found that 17% of the population in the urban area involved in this study had

less than a Grade 9 level of education (Thomas, 1983, p. 59). This figure represented people over the age of 15 who were not attending school full time. Thomas also found that greater percentages of men than women were undereducated. Similarly, the percentage of male learners (53.1%) participating in this study was slightly higher than female learners (46.9%). In support of the gender breakdown, Hall (1983) found in a study of 864 adult education volunteers in England and Wales that 70% of the tutors were female and 30% were male (Hall, 1983, p. 49). The gender difference within the BBC radio campaign was found to be even more pronounced with approximately 80% to 90% of the tutors being female (Jones and Charnley, 1978, p. 52).

The largest age group of illiterate adults in the 1976 census was found to be 70 years and older (Thomas, 1983, p. 61). This was explained from a historical point of view, where circumstances prevented students from pursuing education. Within the sample in this study, the largest group was between 25 to 34 years of age. Similarly, Hall (1983) found that the largest number (44%) of students in adult and continuing education programs were in the age group of 25 to 44 years. The research data generated from the BBC radio literacy campaign confirmed that the largest age group for students was between 21 to 30 years (Jones and Charnley, 1978, p. 73), and suggests that younger rather than older learners become involved in literacy programs.

Thomas (1983) further indicated that the greatest number of undereducated adults are found in urban areas, but the highest percentages are found in rural areas. Within this study sample of 32 tutor-learner pairs, the percentage of learners born in rural areas was 40.6%, compared to 31.3% of tutors born in rural areas.

Extensive research has been carried out with respect to reasons why participants become involved in literacy programs. As indicated in Fingeret's

study (1985), "The literate society uses literacy as an indicator of the ability to reason and therefore, to actively participate in the human social world" (p. 141). Reference is made to the networks illiterate adults create in order to engage in the social world. According to the study conducted by Hall (1983), the most commonly identified reason for tutor motivation was the desire to help others, as represented by 13% of the tutors (p. 52). As evident in the open-ended question in this study, participants identified personal/self development and social interaction as two of the seven categories for learning to read and write (See Table 4.3). Moreover, approximately 60% of tutor-learner pairs agreed that helping people fit into society and being involved in the community were important reasons for learning to read and write.

Research studies, such as the BBC radio literacy campaign identified the tutor's perception of their role as primarily focusing on teaching people to read and write, at least in the initial stages of the campaign (Jones and Charnley, 1978, p. 54). The same perception held true for participants in this thesis study, where 50.0% of learners and 15.6% of tutors viewed tutors as teachers. In addition, learners felt that other tutor roles should include more opportunities for practicing reading and writing tasks. Specific roles of literacy tutors have often been addressed in in-service training manuals. One tutor training manual entitled A Blueprint For Tutoring Adults outlines what is and is not required of tutors. "The tutor is not responsible for providing transportation or any other type of aid to the client outside of the tutoring session" (Hakanson & Gunderson, 1986, p. 2). This guideline does not appear to endorse field trips with learners, or any other community based interactive learning. Learning literacy skills out in the community was rarely viewed as part of the tutor's role, with the exception of a few programs such as Planning Your Vital Tutoring Program. In the latter program, it was suggested that the tutor "consider taking walks, going shopping

together, reading signs and ads, and taking pictures" (Armstrong and Hunt, 1982, p. 37). In relation to this study, it was slightly more common for tutors than learners to feel the responsibility of including learners' home experiences, job experiences and field trips out in the community as part of the tutoring session. For those learners who answered the open-ended Questionnaire item #6 (other roles of tutors), the role of providing social opportunities for learners was mentioned four times, which included a variety of activities such as spending weekends together, frequenting restaurants, going to the library, and going to movies. According to tutors, their additional roles were identified as being supportive and acting as resource people.

The personal characteristics of flexibility, understanding, and patience are supported in various research studies and job descriptions for literacy programs. As revealed in Brown's study (1982), tutors placed "avoiding derogatory remarks" at the top of the list of 11 characteristics affecting the interpersonal relationship of tutors and learners (p. 30). Adult educators emphasize the importance of a safe learning environment, where learners do not feel threatened. Knowles (1980) emphasized the necessity of a creating a trusting environment for learning to be effective. Job competencies, such as expressing oneself clearly, were the highest ranked out of a total of 15 personal and administrative responsibilities for tutors in the study conducted by Brown (1982). Flexibility, understanding, and patience are often used to describe the qualifications of tutors within literacy program manuals: (Mid-York Library System, 1988, p. 16; Lane, 1984, p. 135; Hakanson & Gunderson, 1986, p.5; Brandt, 1985, p. 37; Outman, 1984, p. 13). Similarly, the findings discussed in this study revealed that of the twelve personal characteristics of tutors listed, the following three traits were most frequently included in the top three rankings: ability to express themselves clearly, flexibility, and understanding. Learners in

the thesis study designated the important characteristics of tutors as follows: ability to express themselves clearly, patience, a sense of humor, and self-confidence.

In support of research on the characteristics of the adult learner, Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) describe the adult learner within the analysis of andragogy as being self-directed, having experience they can utilize as a resource for learning, relating learning and the readiness to learn to the tasks associated with social roles, and being problem-centered. Two common categories referred to by participants in this study under Questionnaire item #8, other roles of learners, were showing interest/enthusiasm in and outside of the sessions and taking responsibility for the learning. A few tutors felt that learners should bring their problems forth for discussion and to assist them in identifying appropriate materials.

Implications

Implications for Theory and Practice

There are some general implications based on the findings presented in this study. The implications will be discussed according to the following three areas of adult literacy: curriculum, tutor training, and the tutor-learner relationships.

In terms of the curriculum operating within adult literacy programs, the perception of the tutor's role is influenced by the perspective taken in the curriculum. Hence, if the curriculum emphasizes specific and functional concepts and skills, then the tutor's role will be set accordingly. The tutor who presents aspects of literacy closely aligned with the needs of the learners will most likely be perceived favorably. As revealed in the discussion of findings in this study, learners view literacy needs as more concrete than do tutors. The

curriculum needs to include tangible, relevant, and immediate objectives which respond to the way learners perceive their needs. The demographic data revealed learners with different age categories, educational backgrounds, and cultural heritages. Adult literacy learners are not a homogeneous group and the curriculum needs to attend to this.

With respect to tutor training, some implications focus on expectations of tutors and evaluation methods. Learners in this study felt they should take minimal responsibility for choosing topics, controlling sessions, bringing materials, setting objectives, and evaluating their learning. This situation holds important implications for tutors and learners. First, tutors should initially be aware of this dynamic, and secondly, tutors and learners need to decide if this arrangement is acceptable for their tutoring sessions. Quite possibly, this situation may be taking place without the awareness of participants. It is critical for tutors and learners to have realistic expectations of the tutoring sessions, to be aware of the dynamics, and to communicate this understanding. Throughout this research study, tutors and learners indicated that they had not considered who should be responsible for the tasks, much less if this was a satisfactory arrangement for either partner. Moreover, learners' lack of involvement in evaluation may stem from lack of awareness, lack of choices, or preference for the tutor to carry out evaluation. However, if given the choice, learners may choose to take some initiative in this area. This may ultimately eradicate some of the psychological stresses learners are experiencing in terms of indebtedness. By taking responsibility and ownership for their learning, they may feel more independent and successful. Finally, the curriculum and materials which are used to train tutors may focus on ways to help learners take more responsibility. Materials, activities in the tutoring session, and the type of

relationship between tutors and learners may choose to reflect learner autonomy and self-directedness.

The implications stemming from the tutor-learner relationship highlight the issue of power and question whether tutoring is learner-centered or tutor-centered. When participants were asked "Who should control the tutoring sessions?", there was strong agreement between tutors and learners that this should be the tutor's responsibility. Questions raised by the research include the following: whose needs are being met, is substantial input being received from the learners, could the tutoring sessions include participatory goal setting, and does this situation reflect the learners' desired role of the tutor? The question of who should be responsible for certain tasks is of central concern for the overall tutoring process. What should be the role of the learner? And more importantly, do learners feel they can voice their dissatisfaction at any point in time, or do they feel overly indebted to their tutors? With reference to this particular study, there was no indication that learners were willing or encouraged to voice their concerns regarding the role of the tutor. The tasks and responsibilities tutors performed appeared to be viewed as given and fixed. The only area in which learners felt they should take ownership was the speed of learning.

Implications for Further Research

One area which needs to be researched further is the specific role of the adult literacy learner. Minimal research on literacy learners' roles has been conducted. Once this field is explored, there may unfold several implications for one-on-one tutoring. If the learners' roles are researched, documented in literacy program training manuals, and put into practice, this may clear up some of the ambiguity of responsibility within tutoring sessions. Communication

among those involved in one-on-one tutoring is an area yet to be addressed. While tutor training may focus efforts on explaining the role of tutors, the roles of learners have been neglected. Another issue related to learner roles is self-evaluation for learners in literacy programs. Few studies have researched this component of one-on-one tutoring.

Another interesting research area to explore is the difference between literacy tutors who are paid and those who are volunteers. More specifically, further areas of research could include the following questions:

a. According to learners, what are the differences in how they perceive paid tutors and volunteer tutors?

b. How do tutors themselves differentiate between paid and volunteer workers?

c. What do organizations, policy makers, and government bodies expect from paid tutors as compared with volunteer tutors?

If this study had included a larger sample population, more sophisticated statistics could have been applied to cover the following questions:

a. How do demographic characteristics correlate with learner's view of tutors as teachers, guides, friends, and partners?

b. Is there any relationship between how tutors are viewed (teachers, guides, friends, and partners) and which personal characteristics are seen as important for tutors?

c. What relationship exists between participants' perceptions of the importance of literacy and the amount of responsibility learner's should assume in the various tasks?

Finally, it is important to consider which type of research would best access further information concerning tutor roles: qualitative in-depth interviews of tutors and learners, or questionnaires administered to large samples. The best method to access information needs to be sensitive to adult learners and

avoid intimidating them. The traditional questionnaire format excludes adult learners at the more basic level of reading and writing. It may be important to consider administering different questions to different types of participants.

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Appendix

Learner's Questionnaire

1. Name_____

2. Gender M_____ F_____

3 Address_____

4. Phone number_____

5. Alternative phone number_____

6. Marital Status
   Single_____ Married_____ Divorced/Widowed_____

7. Age
   17-24_____ 25-34_____ 35-44_____
   45-54_____ 55-64_____ 65+_____

8. Place of birth
   City_____ OR Town/Village_____
   Province_____
   Country_____

9. Native (First) language_____

10. Highest level of formal education achieved
    Less than Grade 9_____
    Grade 9_____
    Grade 10-11_____
    Grade 12_____
    1 year college/University_____ Special Education _____
    other, please specify_____

11. What is the last grade your mother completed at school?_____
    What is the last grade your father completed at school?_____
    What is the last grade your husband or wife completed at school?
    _____

12. Are you presently:
    employed full-time_____
    employed part-time_____
    working at home _____
    retired_____
    studying full-time_____
    studying part-time_____
    unemployed_____

13. What is your occupation?_____

14. What is the occupation of your spouse/partner? _____

15. What have your former occupations been?_____
_____

16. Have you ever been in another literacy program?
yes_____ no_____

If yes, please indicate the length of study.

1-3 months_____ 4-6 months_____ 6-12 months_____
1-2 years _____ 2-3 years _____ 3-4 years _____ 4-5 years _____
more than 5 years_____

Name of organization/program _____
_____
_____

17. How many hours per week were you in the program?_____

18. Please list your reasons for enrolling in this program right now.
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19. These are some other reasons given for enrolling in Literacy programs, please check those which are true for you.
a) to learn to read better_____
b) to learn to write better_____
c) to learn to speak English better_____
d) to get a job_____
e) to get a better job_____
f) to be able to help your children with their school work _____
g) to be able to communicate with people at your child's school_____
h) to go on further in school_____
i) to be able to discuss items in the newspaper with friends _____
j) to feel better about yourself _____

SURVEY OF LITERACY TUTOR'S ROLES

The purpose of this survey is to determine your opinion of the desired role of a literacy tutor. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

1. Why do you feel it is important to learn to read and write?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. The following eight statements have been suggested as possible reasons for learning to read and write. For each statement, please indicate the degree of importance it holds for you. (Please circle only one number).

1=very important **4=not very important**
2=important **5=not important at all**
3=no opinion

a) to read and write for one's own purpose	1	2	3	4	5
b) as a basic need for survival	1	2	3	4	5
c) as a human right	1	2	3	4	5
d) to find employment	1	2	3	4	5
e) to live independently	1	2	3	4	5
f) to gain power and try to change one's situation	1	2	3	4	5
g) to help people fit into society	1	2	3	4	5
h) to be involved in the community	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please rank the three most important reasons for learning to read and write from the list in question #2.

first most important _____
second most important _____
third most important _____

4. How do you think of yourself (your tutor) ? (Please check only one).
as a friend _____ as a guide _____ as a teacher _____
as a partner _____

5. Please circle the degree to which you feel the following should be the tutor's responsibility. (Please circle only one number).

1=all of the time **4=not much of the time**
2=most of the time **5=none of the time**
3=some of the time

a) to include the learner's home experiences in the lessons	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
b) to include the learner's job experiences in the lessons	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
c) to include field trips out in the community	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
d) to plan the sessions ahead of time	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
e) to make the tutoring sessions relaxed	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
f) to raise the learner's confidence by giving them praise	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

6. Please indicate **other roles of the tutor** you feel should be included.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7. Please circle the degree to which you feel the following should be; **all the tutor's job, mostly the tutor's job, shared by both, mostly the learner's job, or all the learner's job.**

	tutor's job		**shared**		**learner's job**
a) to choose interesting/meaningful topics	*	*	*	*	*
b) to be in control of the sessions	*	*	*	*	*
c) to decide the speed of the learning	*	*	*	*	*
d) to keep the learner interested	*	*	*	*	*
e) to bring materials for each tutoring session	*	*	*	*	*
f) to decide what should be learned	*	*	*	*	*
g) to suggest a change if an activity is too easy or too hard	*	*	*	*	*
h) to decide how much has been learned	*	*	*	*	*

8. Please indicate **other roles of the learner** you feel should be included.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Listed below are several personal characteristics of tutors. Please indicate the degree of importance you feel each characteristic should hold for the tutor. (Please circle only one number).

1=very important **4=not very important**
2=important **5=not important at all**
3=no opinion

a) have a sense of humor	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
b) be flexible	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
c) be able to accept a challenge	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
d) be able to read non-verbal communication	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
e) be able to express themselves clearly to learners	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
f) be able to accept other people's values	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
g) be patient	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
h) be dependable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
i) show excitement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
j) have self-confidence	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
k) be understanding	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
l) be creative	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

10. Please list the 3 most important characteristics from question #9 which you feel tutors should have.

most important_____

second most important_____

third most important_____

Thank you for your help.

Tutor's Questionnaire

1. Name_____ 2. Gender M_____ F_____

3 Address_____

4. Phone number_____ Alternative phone number_____

5. Marital Status Single_____ Married____ Divorced/Widowed_____

6. Age 17-24_____ 25-34_____ 35-44_____
45-54_____ 55-64_____ 65+_____

7. Place of birth
City_____ OR Town/Village_____
Province_____Country_____

8. Native (First) language_____

9. Highest level of formal education achieved
Grade 10-11_____
Grade 12_____
1 year college/University_____
2 years college/University_____
4 year University Degree_____
Teacher's Degree _____
other, please specify_____

10. Highest level of formal education achieved of:
Mother_____
Father_____
Spouse_____

11. Are you presently:
employed full-time_____
employed part-time_____
working at home _____
retired_____
studying full-time_____
studying part-time_____
unemployed_____

12. What is your occupation?_____

13. What is the occupation of your spouse/partner? _____

14. Have you ever worked as a tutor for another organization?
yes_____ no_____
If yes, please indicate the length of your voluntary work
1-3 months_____ 4-6 months_____ 6-12 months_____
1-2 years_____ 2-3 years_____ 3-4 years_____
4-5 years_____ more than 5 years_____
Name/type of organization_____

15. How many volunteer hours per week do you spend:
preparing lessons _____ working with your learner_____

16. As a volunteer in your present organization have you received any training? yes_____ no_____
If yes, what kind of training was it? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
If no, was it because:
a) no training was necessary_____
b) training was not available_____
c) training facilities were inconvenient_____
d) you chose not to partake in the training_____
e) other reasons, please specify_____
_____

17. Please indicate your reasons for being involved as a tutor_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

18. These are some other reasons for being a tutor, please check those which are true for you.
a) desire to help others_____
b) interest in teaching/communication skills_____
c) interest in developing organizing skills_____
d) interest in serving the community_____
e) interest in supporting adult education services_____
f) desire to learn more about the area of literacy_____
g) desire for a personal challenge_____
h) desire to be creative_____
i) had extra time _____
j) desire to meet people and make new friends_____
k) previous contact with the activities of the organization_____
l) interest stimulated by members of organization_____
m) preparation for a paid job_____

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2. The following eight statements have been suggested as possible reasons for learning to read and write. For each statement, please indicate the degree of importance it holds for you. (Please circle only one number).

1=very important **4=not very important**
2=important **5=not important at all**
3=no opinion

a) to read and write for one's own purpose	1	2	3	4	5
b) as a basic need for survival	1	2	3	4	5
c) as a human right	1	2	3	4	5
d) to find employment	1	2	3	4	5
e) to live independently	1	2	3	4	5
f) to gain power and try to change one's situation	1	2	3	4	5
g) to help people fit into society	1	2	3	4	5
h) to be involved in the community	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please rank the three most important reasons for learning to read and write from the list in question #2.

first most important _____
second most important _____
third most important _____

4. How do you think of yourself (your tutor) ? (Please check only one).
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5. Please circle the degree to which you feel the following should be the tutor's responsibility. (Please circle only one number).

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2=most of the time **5=none of the time**
3=some of the time

a) to include the learner's home experiences in the lessons	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
b) to include the learner's job experiences in the lessons	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
c) to include field trips out in the community	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
d) to plan the sessions ahead of time	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
e) to make the tutoring sessions relaxed	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
f) to raise the learner's confidence by giving them praise	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

6. Please indicate **other roles of the tutor** you feel should be included.

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7. Please circle the degree to which you feel the following should be; **all the tutor's job, mostly the tutor's job, shared by both, mostly the learner's job, or all the learner's job.**

	tutor's job		**shared**		**learner's job**
a) to choose interesting/meaningful topics	*	*	*	*	*
b) to be in control of the sessions	*	*	*	*	*
c) to decide the speed of the learning	*	*	*	*	*
d) to keep the learner interested	*	*	*	*	*
e) to bring materials for each tutoring session	*	*	*	*	*
f) to decide what should be learned	*	*	*	*	*
g) to suggest a change if an activity is too easy or too hard	*	*	*	*	*
h) to decide how much has been learned	*	*	*	*	*

8. Please indicate **other roles of the learner** you feel should be included.

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9. Listed below are several personal characteristics of tutors. Please indicate the degree of importance you feel each characteristic should hold for the tutor. (Please circle only one number).

1=very important **4=not very important**
2=important **5=not important at all**
3=no opinion

a) have a sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5
b) be flexible	1	2	3	4	5
c) be able to accept a challenge	1	2	3	4	5
d) be able to read non-verbal communication	1	2	3	4	5
e) be able to express themselves clearly to learners	1	2	3	4	5
f) be able to accept other people's values	1	2	3	4	5
g) be patient	1	2	3	4	5
h) be dependable	1	2	3	4	5
i) show excitement	1	2	3	4	5
j) have self-confidence	1	2	3	4	5
k) be understanding	1	2	3	4	5
l) be creative	1	2	3	4	5

10. Please list the 3 most important characteristics from question #9 which you feel tutors should have.

most important_____
second most important_____
third most important_____

Thank you for your help.